

THE LIVING AGE.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
1. The Court of Charles II., of Spain, . . . <i>National Review,</i>	51
2. The Prodigal Son. Chaps. 5 and 6, . . . <i>Once a Week,</i>	70
3. Chronicles of Carlingford. Part 5, . . . <i>Blackwood's Magazine,</i>	80

POETRY.—A Shadowed Life, 50. Looking Back, 96. Reliques, 96. The Violet Girl's Song, 96.

SHORT ARTICLES.—Pompeian Glass, 95.

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A SHADOWED LIFE.

A QUIET, pale-faced orphan girl,
My maiden hours were spent
With kinsmen, who the burden bore
In sullen discontent.

One came who saw me taunted—crossed—
Yet willing to obey :
I yearned for change, *he sought a drudge*,
I would not say him *nay*.

None asking how or why I went
Uncared for all my life,
I left the house miscalled my home
To play the part of Wife.

To come when called, to go if told ;
Another's, not my own :
Bound by the ties of earth and heaven,
Yet treading earth—alone.

Had I a heart ? Affections strong ?
Of these I gave no sign,
Or dreamed how deeply I could feel
Till infant lips pressed mine.

Then, as my smiles met answer'ing smiles,
With glad but rev'rent brow,
I thanked that Hand these gifts bestowed,
That some one loved me *now*.

My husband to his hearth at eve
With quiet footsteps came ;
The children clung about my neck ;
Perhaps I was to blame.

If selfish in my new-known joy,
I oft forgot that *he*
An equal claim upon them had,
A claim on them and *me*.

One morn the neighbors whisp'ring stood,
With faces awed and pale,
Of *fever* creeping near they told
A strange and fearful tale.

That hour I joined my children's sports,
At night I wept o'er one ;
Another and another day—
And then—whom had I ?—*none* !

Ah ! wearying days of cureless pain !
Long nights of blank despair !
When voices summon me from sleep
Which, waking, are not there !

The hush of Death was on my soul,
Its silent awe profound
Pursued me through the house, where still
Their busy feet resound !

Long, lonely hours ! in which I strove
My lost ones to forget,
With eyes that still were seeking theirs—
Arms that enclasped them yet !

Or, on my pillow in the dark
A baby still carest,
The most dependent on my care,
Missed most, and loved the best.

Who can take note how time creeps by
When sunk in listless grief ?
Days came—and went—I took no heed,
Nor sought from change relief.

I knew not all my husband felt,
Nor how *he* bore this blow ;
He never told his thoughts to me,
Nor dared I seek to know.

One night, too deeply moved for tears,
I lay in sad unrest,
Exhausted with th' unspoken pangs
My bursting heart oppress ;

When in my startled ear a voice,
My husband's, gently said—
" O wife ! beloved wife, 'tis *here*
Should rest thy aching head !

" Unthinkingly I made you *mine*,
Too careless then to glean
The hopes and wishes hid beneath
Thy calm and serious mien.

" But, lavished on our early lost—
Thy *love* I learned to prize,
And see my quiet, earnest wife
With changed and kinder eyes.

" Too late, I longed to see her turn,
When *my* foot crossed the floor,
The wistful, tender, love-fraught look
She for those dear ones wore.

" And wife ! when Death unlooked-for came
And robbed us day by day,
I learned to dread a greater void,
Shouldst *thou* be snatched away.

" I nor deserve, nor dare to ask
What *should* have been mine own,
And brightened with its trusting faith
The years now sadly flown ;

" But for the sake of those we weep
Be mine in *heart*, in *will* ;
Our grief for them in closer links
Shall bind our future still ! "

Now weeping on his breast I lay—
No more the cold, sad wife ;
Those whispered words that hour had raised
The shadow from my life.

—Once a Week.

LOUISA CROW.

From The National Review.

THE COURT OF CHARLES II. OF SPAIN.

Mémoires de la Cour d'Espagne sous le règne de Charles II., 1678-1682. Par le Marquis de Villars. Londres: Trübner et Cie., 1861.

Mémoires de la Cour d'Espagne. Paris, 1692.

Rélation du Voyage d'Espagne. Paris, 1691.

Lettres de Madame la Marquise de Villars, ambassadrice en Espagne dans le tems du mariage de Charles II., roi d'Espagne, avec la Princesse Marie Louise d'Orléans, fille de Monsieur, frère unique de Louis XIV. et de Henriette Anne d'Angleterre, sa première femme. Amsterdam, 1762.

MEMOIR-WRITING is an indisputable prerogative of the French nation. Under their auspices it has been carried to such a pitch of perfection as to be almost independent of facts. Never, at any rate, has the art of concealing ignorance under an easy affectation of profound knowledge been so pleasantly manifested as in the sparkling *boudoir*-philosophizing of these attractive publications of our ingenious neighbors. If a correct acquaintance with the facts of history could be insured by the multiplication of agreeable autobiographies, and a just appreciation of their bearing and significance be attained by a string of witty epigrammatic sentences, and an inexhaustible mine of philosophical "small-talk," the past events of French history ought to be more certain than the exactest facts of science, and it would be well for other nations to hand over the elucidation of their own past and present doings to the exclusive workmanship of these innate historians. Unfortunately, however, though truth is said to be attainable if we can reach the bottom of the well, it by no means follows that she is to be discovered as the result of the most careful and thorough perusal of a pile of French memoirs. Facts are often stumbling-blocks in the way of clever writing; but we cannot always be satisfied with the latter as their substitute, however much our literary senses may have been tickled by the agreeable manipulation. The untruthfulness of egotism attains its utmost development in these charming self-analyses, and the temptation of generalizing from one instead of many facts has nowhere else been so constantly yielded to. The result is, that we all like to read French

memoirs, but we, most of us, carefully distinguish that process from any accessory accompaniment of faith. In reference to foreign countries, the French are open to another disqualification as historians. Their fancy is so vivid, and their philosophical axioms so effervescent, that they do not give occurrences around them time to explain themselves, far less to be explained by others, but stereotype them forever on their minds in the shape presented by their first crude impression. Every Englishman has smiled at some of the grotesque representations of English manners which have passed current in foreign countries on the authority of some such hasty observer. We ought, in all fairness, to apply the same rule of distrust to the accounts given by such travellers of other countries than our own; and when the scene described is very far removed by distance of time or place from our own power of examining into its truth, we shall feel disposed to read with a faith strongly tempered by hesitation. Still, however, these memoirs, even in such a case, have their value. The French, though they may be inaccurate in facts,—particularly in great ones,—are very acute, and generally tolerably correct observers of little traits of individual character. And when we remember how large and important a part these sometimes play in the business of life, and how suggestive they often are of the true way to the solution of many a mystery, which has been vainly sought in grander political and social considerations, we shall not be disposed altogether to reject the "first impressions" of acute travellers of that very acute nation, even if they are often erroneous in the interpretation which they assume. The misconceptions of a sharp observer often suggest the real fact to those whom it would otherwise have altogether escaped.

The Memoirs and Journey of Madame la Comtesse d'Aulnoy have for some time been regarded by historians of Spain with some such mixed feelings of distrust and interest as we have above endeavored to explain. The lady herself, a member of one of the noble families of France, and on familiar terms of intercourse with the leading men and women of the brilliant court of Louis XIV. in its most brilliant days, seems to have been somewhat of a professed

bookmaker; no recommendation certainly in her favor to the seeker for truth. Nor is the title of her work which is best known in modern times, the *Contes des Fées*, likely to inspire additional faith in her rigid adherence to the facts of mortal occurrences. She was, too, a writer of romances, and besides her two works on Spain, the titles of which we have given above, she composed some memoirs of the court of England. Up to the present time, her trustworthiness has been left to repose chiefly on the internal evidence of the works themselves, and on the general facts which have descended to us from other sources, or on the common voice of tradition as to the characteristics of those times. Mr. Dunlop, in his *Memoirs of Spain during the Reigns of Philip IV. and Charles II.*, published in 1834, expresses her position at that time as an historical authority, when he remarks that "the Italian and Spanish authorities become much more scanty, as also less authentic, for the reign of Charles II. than of his predecessor; and he has therefore, in consequence, been compelled occasionally to have recourse to inferior or less genuine materials, as D'Aulnoy's *Mémoires secrets de la Cour d'Espagne*, etc." The publication, however, by Mr. Stirling, the well-known biographer of the Emperor Charles V., of the volume which stands first at the head of this article materially affects this estimate of the value of Madame d'Aulnoy's contributions to history, while, at the same time, it opens up, but unfortunately does not afford us the means at present of closing, a curious question of literary authorship.

We do not intend to go at length into the matter to which we have referred, which has been already handled, as far as our present materials permit, in the columns of a weekly contemporary; * but we may be permitted to state the outline of the facts. Mr. Stirling, in his preface to his volume (why should he give us the preface and notes in French?), informs us that he purchased the manuscript from which it is printed some seven or eight years ago at some sale in London, but unfortunately he took no note of it, and is now unable to recall either the place or exact time of the purchase. It is a 4to paper volume of four hundred and thirty pages, including a preface of three pages, and twelve

leaves of alphabetical index and table of contents. It appears to be a copy of the original MS. or of another copy, and to have been transcribed for the press. The writer making mention in his preface of Marshal Villars as still living, seems to fix the date of this preface before or in the year 1734, the date of the marshal's death. Sir Frederick Madden, the keeper of the MSS. of the British Museum, has seen no other copy of the memoirs, and has no doubt they have never yet been published. It is a fact, however, of which both Sir Frederick and Mr. Stirling seem to have been unaware, that the memoirs of the Marquis de Villars as now published, were used as an authority by Mr. Dunlop in the work we have referred to, though unconsciously, in most of his extracts from Madame d'Aulnoy's memoirs, or in other words, that a question of priority of authorship is now raised between that lady and the writer of the MS. book now published by Mr. Stirling. It is curious that the latter gentleman has not discovered this himself, as he refers to both Madame d'Aulnoy's works in his notes, and calls attention to one passage in her *Voyage d'Espagne*, which he concedes must either have been copied from, or been the original of, a description in his present volume. The fact, however, is, as any one may ascertain who reads *through* both memoirs, that those of the marquis are incorporated,—generally nearly *verbatim*, sometimes with transpositions of sentences to other contexts, or slight additions and omissions,—but in *substance*, we may say, are *entirely* incorporated in the memoirs of Madame d'Aulnoy, with the exception of some descriptions of state institutions, such as the Council of the Indies, and that of the Inquisition, which appear in the *Voyage d'Espagne*, on the alleged authority of Spanish noblemen, in conversations with Madame d'Aulnoy herself. As the Marquis de Villars did not die till six years after the publication of this lady's work, it could scarcely have escaped his notice, nor, one would suppose, could this appropriation of his memoirs have taken place without his knowledge and sanction. In that case there must have been some pledge of secrecy, for state or private reasons, as to the real authority; and the alleged conversations of the lady with the Spanish noblemen, at any rate, must have been entirely

* See *Spectator* newspaper, March 8th and 15th.

imaginary. Her memoirs, it must be observed, are dedicated to the Princess de Conti, the wife of the nobleman who acted as the King of Spain's proxy at his marriage; and there is no hint as to the source from which the author derived the body of her work. Here we must leave the question, of course with the latter alternative still open, though we think it the less probable that these alleged memoirs of Villars are a mere *réchauffée* of the books of Madame d'Aulnoy. The question is chiefly interesting on account of the greater weight which the adoption of our first hypothesis would give to those passages in Madame d'Aulnoy's books, which would then appear on the authority of the marquis, whose position and means of information were so superior. All beyond these in the lady's volumes must stand, as before, in an inferior position as to credibility.

About the letters of Madame de Villars, written during her husband's second embassy to Spain, to her intimate friend Madame de Coulanges, there happily as yet exists no doubt. They confirm in general in their details both sets of memoirs, but have an independent and especial value of their own from the intimacy of the address with the young Queen of Spain.

In giving some account of these contributions to the history of the court of the last of the lineal male descendants of the great emperor Charles V., we think that less reserve is necessary on the score of credibility than is often the case with such authorities. The memoirs of M. de Villars, at any rate, are written in a clear and unaffected style, without much cause for offence on the score of forced and unnecessary attempts at generalizations or pointed remarks; and if the lady-writers are less free from this imputation, the letters of Madame de Villars, at any rate, have the recommendation of being evidently written on the spur of the moment, and with that want of knowledge of the future, and that crudeness of opinion which adds to the value of historical authorities, though it may detract a little now and then from our estimate of individual penetration. Madame d'Aulnoy—when we have her independently—is more florid and ambitious in her style, and she labors under the drawback of retailing events and anecdotes some years after the time and away from the place.

Still, with the exception of a few melodramatic stories, her more enlarged representation of men and things in Spain agrees substantially with the short notes of Madame de Villars, and the general body of historical evidence. Ceremonial and custom are so constant and indefeasible in Spain, that there was a uniformity even to monotony in its very disorganization. Its vices at this time were in themselves irregular enough, but they fall under such systematic rules, that they cannot fail of speedily impressing themselves in their leading features on the most casual observer; and the degree to which individual character and peculiarities were subordinated to them is so remarkable, that there is less danger than in other cases of the brilliant memoir-writer being carried away by the momentary impressions of a lively imagination. Individual character was getting lost in a common degradation, just as private vices were becoming public and systematic. Men had lost the energy to be original in their sins, and still more the wish or force of character to be original in a different direction.

Pierre, Marquis de Villars, is a name well known in his own time, but less familiar to modern ears than that of his celebrated son, the marshal, Duc de Villars. The marquis—we avail ourselves of Mr. Stirling's brief biography—was born about the year 1618, of a family the antiquity and nobility of which is a controverted question among genealogists. He had certainly neither riches nor powerful relatives to push him forward in the profession he had chosen, that of arms, and he had to rely on a fine figure, a commanding presence, and some considerable skill in the management of the sword. When the Prince de Condé commenced the civil war of 1652, Villars was a follower of the house of Charles Emanuel of Savoy, Duc de Nemours, one of the lieutenants of the prince. In the celebrated duel between the duke and his brother-in-law, the Duc de Beaufort, Villars acted as one of the seconds of the former, and, more fortunate than his principal, succeeded in killing his adversary, the Comte d'Héricourt, whom he then saw for the first time. He had of course to leave the country, and owed his return to France to the good offices of Armand de Bourbon. The Prince de Conti, who, to rid himself of the raillery of

his brother Condé at his weakly constitution and ungraceful figure, had come to the conclusion of provoking the Duke of York, then an exile at Paris, into a duel. This design was discovered and prevented; but Villars, whom the prince had attached to his person, with a view to its better accomplishment, remained in his household, and negotiated a marriage between his patron and a niece of the Cardinal Mazarin, thus gaining a footing with the powerful minister. He also served in Spain and Italy under Conti. Having thus obtained access to the great people of the French court, he soon became a decided favorite with the ladies; and among these is mentioned Madame Scarron, who afterwards, as Madame de Maintenon, is said to have been of essential service to her old acquaintance. He had formed an attachment to a young lady of high birth and considerable beauty, but without fortune, Mademoiselle de Bellefonds, whom he afterwards married; and during their courtship he received from a lady, who observed the lovers together, but was unacquainted with his real name, the *sobriquet* of *Orondates*, one of the handsomest of the heroes of the popular romance, the "Grand Cyrus;" and long afterwards, when age had deprived him of any title to the epithet, he was still familiarly known by it. He served an aide-de-camp to the Grand Monarque in his court campaign in Flanders; but his prospects in the army came to a premature termination, owing to a quarrel between his brother-in-law, afterwards Marshal de Bellefonds, and the war minister, Louvois. After acting for a time as governor of Besançon, and then of Douai, he found himself thrown again on his own private fortune, which being small, he solicited and obtained from his friend M. de Lyonne, minister for foreign affairs, some diplomatic missions to Germany and Italy after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1668. At length, in 1671, he was appointed ambassador to Spain, and after that to Turin; and in 1679, after the negotiation of the marriage of Charles II. of Spain with Marie Louise d'Orléans, he returned to his post at Madrid, where he remained until 1682. This is the embassy of which we have some account in the volumes before us. On his return, Villars was in 1683 created a military councillor of state, and sent as extraordinary ambassador to Denmark. In 1688 he re-

ceived the decorations of the order of "St Esprit;" and in 1692, on the marriage of Philippe, Duc de Chartres, afterwards the Regent Orléans, with Mademoiselle de Blois, he was appointed a chevalier d'honneur to the duchess. He died at Paris on the 20th of March, 1698, after a short illness, and was buried in the church of the Carmelites in Rue St.-Jacques. His widow, whose letters we have spoken of, survived him till the year 1706. It should be added, that, according to the preface supplied by the unknown writer of the MS. copy of the *Memoirs* of the marquis, they were given to the Marquis de Blecourt, as instructions, on his being sent as ambassador to Spain after the Treaty of Partition.

The epoch at which the Marquis de Villars entered on his second embassy to Spain was an important one for that country. A disastrous war had been just terminated by an ignominious peace, which left the country exhausted in its material means, and bankrupt in military glory and national reputation. In the month of June, 1679, when the French ambassador reached Madrid, the responsible minister of Spain was Don Juan of Austria, whom the late king, Philip IV., had recognized as his natural son, and educated for the highest posts in the State. The earlier exploits of the prince were creditable to his talents; but a great misadventure in Portugal, which secured the independence of that country, was seized on by his enemies (to whose neglect of supplies to the army the disaster is attributed) as a means for undermining him in the good graces of his father. The head of the party opposed to him was the queen, Mariana of Austria, Philip's second wife. During the latter part of the reign of that sovereign, therefore, and the regency of the queen-mother which succeeded, Don Juan was banished from court and from all public employments. The queen-mother, with her advisers and favorites, Father Nithard, her German confessor, and an Andalusian adventurer named Valenzuela, monopolized all the powers of the State; and even after these ministers were driven from power, in consequence of the extreme unpopularity of their administration, the queen continued to maintain herself at the helm of government, and ruled very much as she chose until the commencement of the year 1677, when a strong

confederacy of nobles summoned Don Juan from his retirement in Arragon, and compelled the queen-mother to abandon her authority and retire in her turn to seclusion and a most harassing and humiliating espionage at Toledo. Don Juan now succeeded to the government in the fulness of a popularity with all classes which had been growing up for many years. Before two years had elapsed, he had effectually dissipated all the hopes that had been entertained respecting him, and had rendered his administration as generally detested as that of his predecessor. Sensible of the precarious character of his position, he had endeavored to secure himself, not by throwing new energy and order into the management of affairs, but by banishing several powerful nobles, under pretence of their leaning to the interests of the queen-mother. Of these the most important was the Duke de Ossuna. Another young nobleman, of some reputation, the Count de Monterey, who had been the head of the party which brought back Don Juan to power, was banished by the latter on account of his getting too much into the young king's good graces. He entirely neglected the king's education; kept him in a state of complete indolence; would not even suffer him to leave the palace unaccompanied by him; and made not the slightest attempt to initiate him into public affairs. The people, as the ambassador observes, would have easily consoled themselves for the disgrace of the nobles, and the enslavement of the king, if the minister had found some means of relieving their own misery; but, on the contrary, it increased, and with it the taxes. Scarcity became greater; justice was as much wanting as ever, and the finances in as great disorder. No one found himself better off; many found themselves worse. The ill-feeling became general, and people began to regret the regency. But, our ambassador continues, in Spain, more than in any other place in the world, the anger of the people is impotent. This nation, so filled apparently with pride, seems to lack the heart to do more than murmur at its calamities and those of the State. The exiled nobles were likely to be more dangerous enemies to the minister, through their numerous relations and connections, and in fact these secretly entered into correspondence with the queen-mother, and began to

plot her return to power. Libels of every sort, and a general ferment in the public mind, seemed to augur a coming storm, and the minister, filled with anxiety, but naturally irresolute, remained inactive, perceiving the machinations of his enemies in every direction, but not considering himself strong enough to assume the offensive, and feeling the ground shaking under him even in his last stronghold, the king's palace.

Charles II. of Spain—of whose declining years Lord Macaulay has drawn such a vivid and painful picture—had now attained the age of eighteen. For some years after his birth it seemed probable that the feeble and sickly child would, by a premature death, bring the question of the succession to the throne to an immediate crisis. But he struggled on through childhood into youth, and in his sixteenth year appeared to shake off, in some measure, the symptoms of disease which had seemed to foreshadow his death. He is described, at the period of which we are now speaking, as being of a fair and delicate complexion: his forehead rather broad, his eyes fine and with much sweetness in their expression; his face very long and narrow, very thick Austrian lips, and wide mouth; his nose very aquiline, his chin sharp and turned up. He had a profusion of fair lank hair put behind his ears. He was of middle height; his body straight and slender; with small legs "almost all of a thickness." If from this description by an eye-witness we turn to the portrait which illustrates Mr. Stirling's volume, we shall be able to identify the lineaments, though it represents him at a more advanced age. There is the breadth of forehead, strangely contrasting with its lowness and flatness. With the exception of its great length, and the protuberance of the lips, the face is a handsome one. The artist has not given us the complete impression of the aquiline nose, but he has done justice to the eyes, and probably more than justice to the hair. But, what the eye-witness has failed to point to, the artist has unintentionally conveyed—the vacuity of the mind which should have animated these not unprepossessing outlines. The forehead, if free from decided marks of want of intelligence, is at least neutral on the question. The nose, whose contour might have imparted some impression of strength to the face, is far from being able,

with the regularity of its curve, to overpower the testimony of the eyes and mouth,—the former mild, somewhat sleepy, and wholly without expression; the latter roughly cut, purposeless, and devoid alike of refinement and sagacity. It is altogether a countenance a first glance at which might give an impression of physical good looks, but a second could hardly fail to leave the conviction of intellectual, if not moral, deficiency. The mould of something greater and nobler was still partially preserved, though here and there defaced and broken; but the energy which should impart nervousness and character to the outlines was wholly wanting. The last of a line of princes, whose blood, originally tainted with the imbecility of Juana of Castile, and the strange and morbid fancies of her great son, had gone on degenerating, and giving more and more evident symptoms of disease, through the three successive Philips, Charles II. seemed born for the purpose of exhibiting the decay of his race in its most pitiable form, as he also inherited an empire reduced to the lowest state of prostration and misery, through the long-continued exercise of their selfish and ignorant despotism. He was the offspring of one of those marriages which for so long a time disgraced the reigning families of the Peninsula, his father and mother standing in the mutual relation of uncle and niece. The intermarriages with the kindred branch of Hapsburg, so often repeated during the century which followed the establishment of the family of Charles V. on the throne of Spain, could hardly be bettered in their results by this outrage on the laws of consanguinity. It is very possible, indeed, that a different training in childhood and youth might have checked in the heir of Charles V. the immediate growth of this mental incapacity. But neither the queen-mother nor Don Juan seem to have attempted to rouse or enlarge the mind of their royal ward; and the latter, at any rate, seems to have been bent on narrowing it and deadening its energies still more, for the purpose of maintaining his own ascendancy, if not with the ultimate idea of himself superseding his half-brother on the throne. The unfortunate youth can hardly have been naturally of a bad disposition, or else such a course of studied neglect and demoralization could not have failed to develop itself in

some flagrant acts of wickedness. But perhaps the unquestionable mental disease which lay in his veins partook so much of the character of inaction and want of sustained interest in most objects, that many of the evils of such an ill-regulated education were guarded against by nature herself. His youthful freaks, if not particularly amiable, do not imply much more than thoughtless selfishness. Thus Madame d'Aulnoy tells the following story, which, if not true in itself, probably represents pretty well a class of incidents which were understood by courtiers and their friends to reflect the character of the young sovereign: "Some days ago," she says, "when it rained and thundered most terribly, the king commanded the Marquis de Astorga to wait for him upon the terrace-walk of the palace. The good old man said to him, smiling, 'Sire, will it be long before you come?' 'Why do you ask?' said the king. 'That your majesty,' replied he, 'may send a coffin to put me in; for there's no likelihood that I should be able to contend with such weather as this.' 'Go! go! marquis,' says the king; 'I'll come to you.' The marquis went out, and without any scruple stepped into his coach, and went directly home. Two hours afterwards the king said, 'I'm certain the good man is wet to the skin; let him be called in. I've a mind to see him in such a condition.' But they told the king that he had not exposed himself at all; upon which Charles observed that he was not only old, but very wise!"

He seems, indeed, to have been, like our own Charles II., generally good-natured, so far as ingrained selfishness would permit, and unless there were some immediate disturbing cause, but with the entire thoughtlessness of a selfish man as to the feelings of others, and with a complete disregard of them when they crossed his immediate whim,—happily generally of a transient character. His daily life was dreary and monotonous enough. At home he was either entirely idle, among dwarfs and strange animals, or playing at games of hazard for the very smallest stakes, and in the dreariest way. He was minute and sedulous in the ceremonials of religion, and expecting all about him to go through the same forms. At the proper seasons he was diligent in going from church to church, and

liked particularly to make ceremonial visits to the convents, and hear the services performed there, and sit through the most formal and uninteresting interviews with the superiors. Now and then he listened patiently to the performance of long Spanish comedies. Twice a year he made the appointed state journeys to the palaces of the Escorial and Aranjuez; at the former gloomy mansion of the dead he visited the tombs of his royal ancestors, at the latter he rode out to battues of enclosed game. Sometimes he indulged in boar or wolf hunts, and probably his greatest personal achievement on record is that narrated by himself in the following brief epistle, despatched by special courier to his young queen, during a short absence from Madrid: "Madame, the wind is very high. I have killed six wolves!" He had, however, displayed two decided aversions,—one to women in general, the other to everything and everybody French. The reason of the former is said to have been the extremely displeasing impression which he had derived from his treatment by the *gouvernante* and ladies in waiting, to the mercy of whose ceremonial tyranny he had been handed over from his birth down to an absurdly late period of his boyhood. The story is, that as a youth he would fly from the face of a woman as from the pestilence. Perhaps Don Juan built on this rooted aversion when he was compelled to entertain the idea of the marriage of the young king, and hoped that the delays thus interposed to every proposed match would end in the king remaining unmarried. The queen-mother had entered into a marriage contract for her son with her niece, the daughter of the Emperor Leopold; but Don Juan had broken off the match, and the young princess married the Elector of Bavaria. An alliance with the royal family of France was now proposed, though by whom first it is not easy to say; and Don Juan was obliged to pretend to promote this match, while secretly raising obstacles to its realization. But if he counted on the king's repugnance to any woman, and much more to a French woman, he was grievously disappointed. No sooner had the young prince seen the portrait of the Princess Marie Louise of Orleans, the daughter of the King of France's brother, and granddaughter of our Charles I., than he fell violently in love with it; and the

courtiers around him, who were opposed to Don Juan, and some of whom had seen the princess, inflamed still further his new-born passion by dilating on her beauty and accomplishments. Before this newly awakened torrent of love everything gave way. In vain did Don Juan suggest impossible conditions as preliminaries to the marriage treaty; in vain did he try the countercharm of a portrait of the Infanta of Portugal, and even despatch an envoy to open negotiations in that quarter. The king had for once made up his mind; the nobles opposed to Don Juan saw in the match a means of undermining his power; the Spanish nation, eager to secure a successor to the throne, and mindful of the virtues of the young French wife of Philip II., entered warmly into their youthful monarch's enthusiasm; the queen-mother applauded the match, seeming to have forgotten her own defeated project; and the Grand Monarque, Louis XIV., expressed his ready consent. The Spanish minister therefore found it best to carry out with a good grace what he could not prevent, and the marriage took place by proxy at Fontainebleau. Eight days after the arrival of the news of this event at Madrid, Don Juan of Austria expired of a fever, brought on by the ruin to himself which he saw impending. The king visited him in his last illness, and exhibited signs of great emotion, tenderly reproaching him with leaving him unsupported by his advice at such a crisis of public affairs. It is certain, at the same time, that the king had been holding secret consultations with the disaffected courtiers, whom he had compelled Don Juan to recall from exile a short time before. Probably both actions were genuine in their turn; the king longed to get rid of his arbitrary master, but when the time of release approached, became alarmed at the idea of the loss of his counsels, and remembered only how well he had saved him from the trouble of thinking! The public rejoicings for the marriage of the king were going on while the minister lay dying; and even under his windows the noise of fireworks increased the intensity of the headache with which he was oppressed.

Two days after the death of his minister, the king hastened to Toledo to see his mother, that minister's greatest enemy. They both displayed signs of the warmest mutual

affection, and returned together to the palace of the Buen-Retiro, near Madrid, where the king visited her every day, till he set off to Burgos to meet his bride. With her expected arrival everybody was now occupied, and state affairs and the organization of a new cabinet were alike postponed till this event had taken place. The king's ardor rather increased than abated. If she were not arrived at Burgos when he reached that city, he declared, according to Madame de Villars, that he would carry off the archbishop of that city with him to Vittoria, or even the frontier of France, if she had advanced no further. The young queen travelled, according to state usage, attended by a brilliant escort of French cavaliers and dames d'honneur. Every stage of her progress was notified by despatch to the court of Spain; and the grand major-domo of the palace, our friend the Marquis de Astorga, and the camereramayor, regulated their progress to meet her in accordance with this programme. The young queen had exhibited no such eagerness for the match as her future husband had done. She is said to have been desirous of marrying her cousin the dauphin, and to have replied to Louis XIV., when he told her he could have found no grander match than that with Spain for his own daughter, "Ah, sire, but you might have done better for your niece!" She was about a year younger than her husband, and seems to have possessed much of the personal attractions and the gay *insouciant* tone of character which had rendered her unfortunate mother, Henrietta of England,* the darling of the brilliant court of France. She was now to quit this joyous and congenial scene, in the midst of which she had moved the whole of her life, and to be consigned, in the very prime of youth and beauty, to the dull ceremonialism and punctilious gravity of the Spanish court. "Que c'est une belle chose de rire en Espagne!" exclaims Madame de Villars, in the exasperation of her Parisian feelings at the solemn outward demeanor which every true Spaniard thought it his or her duty to assume in the intercourse of daily life. No two nations, she tells us could possibly more entirely differ in everything es-

pecially their social habits, than the French and Spaniards. It was to such a sphere of life that the bright young French princess was to be transferred, with seemingly little, if any, previous tuition as to her necessary change of habits. Madame de Villars complains, more than once, in her letters, that no experienced person had been sent with the princess to her new home, who might have advised her on such points and on her conduct generally, and on whose advice she might have safely relied. Perhaps they feared to tell her too much of what was impending over her, and the less they said on the subject of her future husband probably the better for her present passive acquiescence in the match. As long as her journey continued to lie through France, all went on much in accordance with the routine of her former life. She eat in public, she danced, she rode on horseback at her pleasure, she enjoyed the *chasse*, and she gambled with her attendants. Madame de Villars tells us that she lost, during her journey, in the last-mentioned amusement, no less than a thousand pistoles to the Prince and Princess d'Harcourt. When they had to quit the young queen on their return to France, they had considerable doubts as to the fate of this debt of honor; but their young companion faithfully remitted the sum to them from Madrid. Shortly before the cavalcade met that of the King of Spain, one of the old *sous-gouvernantes*, who had insisted, notwithstanding her infirmities, on pursuing her appointed destination, actually expired in her litter; and so the queen met her husband attended by a corpse! This might seem no unfit prelude to the unpleasant change in her life which occurred on her entering the territory of Spain. In a moment she found herself surrounded by persons wholly unknown to her, and to whose language she was equally a stranger, whose ceremonial attentions embarrassed her, and whose constrained and stiff manners, to use M. de Villars' expression, took away from her all that had constituted "*la douceur de sa vie*." The camerera-mayor, the Duchess de Terra-Nova, is painted in very unpleasant colors by both M. de Villars and Madame d'Aulnoy. Madame de Villars is more lenient or more cautious; she speaks of her as "*spirituelle et très-honnête*;" but in her letters, it must be remembered (which were

* It is curious that Mariana, the mother of Charles II. of Spain, was the daughter of that Infanta for whose sake Charles I. of England—the grandfather of the Princess Marie Louise of Orleans—made his adventurous journey to Spain.

evidently handed about the court of France), she endeavors to make the best of everything; and the special traits which she records of the camerera-mayor's actual conduct fully support the less favorable estimate. The antecedents of the duchess do not prepossess us in her favor. She had formerly been obliged to leave Madrid, on suspicion of having caused the death of her cousin-german, Don Carlos of Arragon, to whom belonged the duchy of Terra-Nova, and other property, which she kept him out of possession of. In Arragon, whither she retired, she formed the friendship of Don Juan, who detected her great ambition and boldness, disguised under formal and *dévoté* manners. She was supported by his influence till his death, when every one supposed that she would be ruined. But she proved herself able to hold her own. Having received from him the appointment of camerera-mayor to the new queen, she set out with the Marquis de Astorga, and others who had been named to their posts under the same influence, and determined, in conjunction with them, to take up such a position with her royal mistress as should safely entrench her against all her enemies. Her plan was to gain, by fair or other means, a complete ascendancy over the mind of the inexperienced girl; and with this view she exaggerated all the rigid rules of Spanish punctilio, and at once endeavored to banish from the queen's life everything that she had been accustomed to in France, making her thus dependent on her for the regulation of every action, and isolating her effectually from every other influence except that of the Marquis de Astorga, and her other confidants. To support this assumption of authority with the queen, the duchess first made herself acquainted, from the French attendants and others, with everything which would throw light on the queen's early life and disposition. When she had fathomed what we shall soon see was not a difficult or deep character, she insinuated to the king, to whom she paid assiduous court, that it was necessary to guard against his wife's natural French volatility and thoughtlessness, and that, to prevent evil counsels and habits from forming themselves, she could not be too closely restricted to the customary rules by which the conduct and habits of the Spanish queens were regulated. She gave the king the

idea that she alone, by her appreciation of the queen's disposition and foibles, was competent to perform the necessary office of surveillance; and thus, through the inexperience and timidity of the one, and the weakness and prejudices of the other, the duchess found herself mistress of the situation, and able to bid defiance to any change of state ministers. Into the unsuspecting ear of the young queen she poured — if our French authorities are to be believed — every kind of warning and insinuation against the queen-mother and the French ambassador, whom she represented, seemingly with justice, as entirely in the queen-mother's interests. There had been some disagreements between Don Juan and the Marquis de Villars as to the ceremonial to be observed in their interviews; the former claiming, and having exacted from some of the other ambassadors, the honors due to an Infante of Spain. Villars had also paid a visit, on his arrival, to the queen-mother at Toledo, and had been welcomed by her partisans as a valuable ally, though he was too cautious to commit himself to their counsels. As respects the queen-mother, however, the reports of the camerera-mayor were calumnious and indefensible in the highest degree. So far from being hostile to her son's wife, as the duchess pretended, on account of the abortive Austrian match, the queen-mother, from beginning to end, displayed the warmest and most affectionate feelings towards her young daughter-in-law, and endeavored by every means in her power, to promote her comfort and happiness in her trying position, and to gain her confidence. In this last attempt she was long unsuccessful, owing to the prejudices impressed on the young queen's mind by the camerera-mayor and her confederates.

From the moment of her setting foot in Spain, intriguers of all descriptions flocked around the queen. Two of these especially deserve notice. A Theatin of Sicily, of the name of Ventimiglia, formerly a creature of Don Juan's, who had distinguished himself by his abusive sermons against the queen-mother, now upon the termination of his patron's career, determined if possible, by a bold stroke, such as that of the Duchess de Terra-Nova, to secure a place for himself in the future disposition of affairs. He, like others, hoped, through the instrumentality of the young queen, to place in power a cabinet of

their own selection. Setting out, accordingly, in company with the Duke de Ossuna, master of the horse to the queen, who was animated by similar motives, the Theatin made his way to the presence of the queen, and by his adroit and pleasing manners gained credit with her and her French attendants as a useful counsellor. He also confirmed the calumnies against the queen-mother and the French ambassador; but he went too far in his ambitious efforts. Not content with advising who ought and who ought not to be admitted to her majesty's confidence, he went so far as to draw up a scheme of government, which he submitted to the Prince d'Harcourt, and a new cabinet, at the head of which figured the Duke de Ossuna. He even had the audacity to draw up two more similar memoranda and submit them to the queen, through a French gentleman in his interests. The papers were almost immediately returned to him, and he received forthwith an order from the king to quit his dominions. He obeyed, complaining bitterly of the French ambassador, to whose influence he attributed his disgrace. The Duke de Ossuna failed in a somewhat similar manner, arrogating to himself as master of the horse, functions which properly belonged to the Marquis de Astorga, as major-domo. The latter, who, we have seen, was not deficient in spirit, complained by letter to the king; and, on the injunctions of the monarch to the Duke de Ossuna being disregarded by that nobleman, he was at length ordered to return forthwith to Madrid, and not to approach Burgos, in the neighborhood of which the marriage ceremony was to take place.

The French ambassador had hastened with the rest to meet the young queen. He obtained an interview with her, and found her much out of spirits, and very uneasy at the reports poured into her ears, and at the strange and ungenial habits of life to which she had been introduced. He endeavored to suggest to her the best means of accommodating herself to her new position, and recommended her especially to cultivate the friendship and seek the advice of the queen-mother, of whose good-will and affection for her he gave the strongest assurances. But he found that his counsels met cold acceptance, owing to the prejudices which the duchess and her allies had already instilled

into the queen's mind. An attempt was even made by this clique to prevent him from being present at the ceremony, which took place, not at Burgos, but at Quintanapalla, a place which the ambassador describes as the most miserable village in Castile, consisting of only nine or ten houses. Here, however, it was performed in the most paltry and mean manner. The meeting of the king and queen had been an embarrassing one on both sides. Neither could speak a word of the other's language; and the ambassador found his services as interpreter between them of great use. With Parisian dexterity, he improvised or invented some pretty compliments on both sides, and no doubt contributed in this manner to make the first impressions more pleasing than they otherwise would have been. The queen, we are told, was fairly astonished at the king's dress and appearance; and the king scarcely realized his preconceptions of the beauty of his wife till she exchanged her French dress for one made in the Spanish fashion. They made a solemn entry together into Burgos; and the young queen charmed even the grave Spaniards by her gentle and graceful manners. As our readers may be curious to know what were the relations into which the newly married pair settled down with respect to one another, we will anticipate dates a little and follow them into their daily life at the Buen-Retiro, and afterwards at Madrid. Madame de Villars must be our chief informant; for although the camerera-mayor made an attempt to shut her out as well as her husband from all early intercourse with the queen, on grounds of state ceremony, they both carried their point, owing to the interference of the queen-mother and the strong wishes of the queen herself, who longed more and more for some one French to talk over old times and old friends with, and to pour out her grievances to. This intercourse became more and more unrestrained, cordial, and frequent. The ambassador endeavored to draw back and limit it a little in point of frequency, but the queen's importunity prevailed; and we thus gain a curious portrait of the young mistress of the royal palaces of Spain. The picture is of a mixed character. Nothing in itself could be less inviting than the life which she was doomed to lead. Madame de Villars, disposed as she was to see everything which *must be* in the best

possible light, repeatedly expresses her astonishment that any one could preserve either health or spirits under such a monotonous and wearing trial. As to the actual affection of the royal pair, the ambassadress contents herself with saying, that the king loved her after his fashion, and she him after hers. The former consisted in a desire to lose sight of her as little as possible; to make her play at a wearisome game at hazard, at which he could not lose by any possibility more than one pistole; and to drag her forth to his dreary visits to the convents. A pleasanter mode of showing his affection,—which seems to have been real, though otherwise of a strange, tiresome, uninteresting character,—was to make her presents, which the queen, Madame de Villars says, was well pleased to receive. And these, she adds, were her only consolation. Some relaxations had been introduced into the severe discipline of the camerera-mayor, owing to the interference of the queen-mother, who saw the unhappiness of her daughter-in-law, and told the king her health would otherwise become affected. But the king continued to display his aversion to everything French. Madame de Villars tells us that he disliked herself less than any of the other French women about the queen; but this she candidly adds, was because he saw less of her. The queen's French pets fared still worse. Madame d'Aulnoy tells us some amusing stories in illustration of this. The queen had brought with her from France several French dogs and some parrots. The king hated both; and when he saw the former, he would cry, "Off with you! off with you! French dogs!" One night a favorite spaniel of the queen's, who slept in her bedchamber, was missed by her. She rose and proceeded to hunt for the animal. The king, finding her missing, rose in his turn, to seek her. They were both groping in the dark, and stumbling against everything for some little time, till the king, losing all patience, called out to the queen to know why she had got up. On learning the cause, "What!" he exclaimed, "are the king and queen of Spain to get up for a wretched little dog?" and in his vexation he gave a kick with his foot to the little animal, which unluckily had just run against his legs, and thought of killing it. The queen, at the cries of the animal, could not refrain from complaining gently,

and returned to her bed very sad. Neither king nor queen, however, could find the dog again, and they had to summon the *femmes de chambre* for a light. The next morning the king left the queen early for the hunt, without a word to her. Much troubled at this, she watched at the window for his return, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Duchess de Terra-Nova, who said it did not become a queen of Spain to look out of the windows. When she saw the king coming, the queen hastened to meet him, and re-assuming for the moment her old pleasant *liberté française*, threw her arms round his neck. The king, in his turn, charmed for a time both out of his ill-humor and his Spanish etiquette, embraced her several times, instead of merely pressing both her arms with his hands, as was the custom in Spain. Finding him thus softened, the queen seized the opportunity to procure from him the recall of the Duke de Ossuna to his office of master of the horse at the palace.

The fate of the parrots was still more tragic. They had rendered themselves peculiarly obnoxious to king and Spaniards by only speaking French: the queen had by this time made herself mistress of some Spanish. The camerera-mayor took matters into her own hands, and during the absence of the queen wrung the birds' necks. The queen, on learning what had occurred, when the camerera-mayor came to kiss her hand, boxed her ears twice. The camerera-mayor assembled all her kindred and friends at the palace, and demanded redress from the king for the insult offered to her. The king, unwitting of the original cause, which both parties concealed from him, exhorted the queen to make amends to the camerera-mayor. The queen, like a true French woman, devised an ingenious excuse for her conduct, which implied that it was a whim occasioned by a state of things which promised an heir to the Spanish throne. The king, deluded and delighted, expressed his willingness in that case that she should cuff the camerera-mayor as much as she liked! But Madame de Villars soon guessed, and eventually all Spain and Europe learnt, that an event so fondly desired by all Spaniards was out of the question. The king's affection, such as it was, assumed at times a troublesome form. His dislike to any French person, fostered by the Duchess de Terra-

Nova, was carried to the most absurd lengths. Not content with getting rid—by rendering their life insupportable—of all the French attendants of the queen, he was jealous of the most insignificant Frenchman who passed under her windows, and even put himself into the most violent state of excitement at a wretched fool who begged alms of the queen as she entered her carriage. A still greater commotion was occasioned by two gentlemen in the train of the ambassador of Holland, who chanced to make a profound reverence to the queen as they met her and the king in the royal carriage. As they were dressed in the French fashion, and stopped on the queen's side of the carriage, the camerera-mayor took such umbrage at it, on the king's part, that a message was actually sent to the ambassador that no one should place himself on the queen's side of the carriage, or bow to her. It is amusing to find, from a story told by Madame d'Aulnoy, that the king remained altogether ignorant of what might have been a legitimate cause of jealousy: twice the queen found in her pocket on retiring to rest, a letter addressed, "For the queen alone." The first time she opened it, and found it full of expressions of passionate love, and apparently from some one high at court. Puzzled how to act, afraid of a violent scene if she showed it to the king, and yet fearing it might be a snare of the camerera-mayor, the young queen very wisely took an opportunity of giving it to the queen-mother, asking her advice, and begging her to keep it. The queen-mother comforted and re-assured her, promising she would take care no mischief came of the matter. On receiving, after an interval of time, a second letter, the queen, without opening it, carried it also to the queen-mother, who repeated her re-assuring words, and afterwards told the story to a Spanish lady of high rank, from whom Madame d'Aulnoy derived it, as an instance of the queen's innocence and frank disposition. Madame de Villars, admitted to greater intimacy, gives us much the same impression of the young queen's character. Notwithstanding her sad and monotonous life, the buoyant spirits of the French princess rose again on the most trifling opportunity. She not only preserved her health, but grew more robust, her throat becoming rather too

full for severe beauty. "It is a fine thing," exclaims Madame de Villars, "for preserving health and beauty, to be eighteen, and with a disposition that believes in the possibility of everything which it wishes!" When alone with the ambassadress, her girlish spirits rose to the highest, and she must have presented a charming picture as she walked up and down the stately gallery—her light graceful figure, decked with a profusion of jewels, reflected in the mirrors as she passed, and glancing in the light cast by the ranges of silver candlesticks, which were replenished at intervals with low obeisances by the little maids of honor, none of them above ten years of age—her complexion transparently fair and clear—her beautiful brown hair parted across her forehead, and falling over her shoulders behind, clasped in a heavy circlet of gems—her eyes brilliant and expressive—her mouth full of sweetness, and particularly charming when she smiled—in all the bloom of youth and beauty. Now she would play on some musical instrument, of several of which she was mistress; now she would dance to the playing of the ambassadress. Her dancing was one of her great accomplishments. Madame de Villars once read her a passage in a letter from Madame de Sévigné, in which that lady spoke of the young queen's pretty little feet, that made her dance so nicely, and walk so gracefully. The queen was pleased at this, but soon bethought her that there was nothing now for her poor little feet to do but to pace up and down the saloon, and carry her to bed at half-past eight in the evening. This was one of her smaller grievances, and it was a great triumph on her part when she persuaded the king to sit up till ten o'clock at night, and even to drive out at that hour in the hot summer evenings. Now, for a change, she would call upon Madame de Villars or her daughter, who sometimes accompanied her, or took her place,—to join her in singing an air from the last French opera, or one of M. de Calanges' songs, duly forwarded from Paris for her recreation. Then she loved, if she could, to entice the cautious ambassadress into stories of the gayeties and doings, past and present, of the court of France; but Madame de Villars generally changed the subject, finding it was a dangerous thing to dwell on the pleasant memories of Fon-

tainable and St. Cloud. These unreserves were of course when they were alone, or could converse without being understood. The king only too frequently entered the room, when every one, according to etiquette, at once quitted it. He would then carry off the reluctant queen to his dull game for a pistole; but she behaved admirably on all such occasions, and during all this tedium never failed in her assiduous and affectionate attentions to the king, and in her unbroken cheerfulness. The ambassadress cannot too much praise her discretion in these respects. Now and then only she forgot herself for a moment, sometimes harmlessly enough. Once, at the representation of a dull Spanish comedy at the palace, sitting with the king and queen-mother behind a screen, she suddenly called out Madame de Villars' name. That lady happened to be close at hand, and thinking herself summoned, made her appearance. The young queen on seeing her, burst out laughing; and the queen-mother, as the ambassadress says, always glad to see her daughter-in-law amused, lent her countenance to the frolic. Such a bright, happy, amiable character is an agreeable interlude in the dull and miserable records of this reign. Fortunate, indeed, was it for the young princess that she possessed this gayety and buoyancy of spirit, without those deeper feelings and aspirations which would have rendered her life insupportable, and embittered every trifling pleasure. The ambassadress, more than once, after dwelling on her charming sweetness and gentleness, ends with the words, *Et voilà tout!* But we must hurry from this "interior" of the palace, which the skilful hand of the French woman has drawn for us, to the less pleasing events of public life.

Though the disposition of the young queen was a happy thing for her own peace of mind, it was far from being equally advantageous to the Spanish nation. Nothing was so much wanted in Spain at this time as a commanding mind, or rather one which was free from the vices of procrastination and irresolution. Don Juan's talents had been rendered of no avail by these defects, and his energy had generally exhausted itself on the smallest and least important minutiae of business, except at long intervals when his neglect of weightier matters was exchanged for some sudden and rash

resolution. His death left the field clear for the regeneration of Spain, under some more vigorous and continuous policy. But if everything needed bold and decisive measures, everybody seemed paralyzed by excessive self-distrust and indecision. No one would venture to grasp openly at the helm of State, though all secretly coveted it for their private ends. There was plenty of ambition; some, though very moderate, talent; a little, but very little patriotism; excessive pride and insolence; intense selfishness; absolute moral cowardice; and a clinging plague of sloth and self-indulgence. The nation had degenerated at the same time with, though happily less rapidly than, its monarchs. Everybody wished to be at the head of affairs, without the trouble or risk of getting there, and without any conception of what was to be done, supposing the elevation attained. Everybody saw difficulties enough to prevent him from taking a decided step; but no one could reconcile himself to giving up altogether the idea of interfering. In this state of things, all sought to shelter their own responsibility under some one else's name, who might bear the blame if anything went wrong, and lay no claim to the merit if any good resulted. They all first thought of the queen-mother, who had once already been in such a position. But she was sobered and rendered timid by experience and her exile, with its attendant miseries. Her chief idea now was to preserve her favor with the king her son, and co-operate indirectly, but not lead openly, in the counsels of the State. She thought at first of the young queen, as the natural and least dangerous instrument for ruling the king and kingdom. She made, as we have said, several attempts to gain her confidence, and prepare her for such a part. But the queen, besides being prejudiced against her counsellor, was so timid and yielding in her general disposition, and so much preferred the *agréments* and *menus plaisirs* of life to the matters of State policy, of which she was profoundly ignorant (though she was not devoid of insight into character)—she was so unambitious, and so much preferred anything that would give immediate pleasure to herself, whom (as Madame de Villars quaintly observes) she dearly loved, or would realize some amiable or agreeable fancy, that it soon became apparent that she

must be left to occupy herself with her little embarrassments between the king and the camerera-mayor. The next persons who might pretend to become the heads of a party and of the State, were the Duke de Medina-Celi and the Constable of Castile. The former, of high birth and descent, of the blood of Foix and Castile, and a seventimes grandee of Spain, wealthy both in his own possessions and in those of his wife (an heiress of the house of Aragon de Cardona), "Sumillier" of the Body, and President of the Council of the Indies, was at this time forty-five years of age, of conciliating and courteous manners, and with the power, which he had successfully used, of making himself particularly agreeable to the king personally. To this suave and even-tempered nobleman the Constable of Castile presented a great contrast. Of high birth and a large landholder, though of very moderate wealth, tenth Constable of Castile, Grand Master of the King's Household, and "Doyen" of the Council of State, a man of some talent and experience, gained chiefly in Flanders, but austere and reserved in his demeanor,—he had been the only man whom Don Juan had not dared to exile, though his attachment to the queen-mother was un concealed. The idea now was entertained by a party of the latter's adherents of placing the constable at the head of a select junta of government, which would enable him, in conjunction with the queen-mother, to rule the kingdom. The old adherents of Don Juan, alarmed at this, gathered round the Duke de Medina-Celi; while between the two parties stood the Secretary of State, Don Jeronimo de Eguya, a man who had raised himself to his present position by assiduous compliancy, first to the minister Valenzuela, and after his overthrow to Don Juan. He had made himself necessary, as a man of business, to each of these, and had betrayed each in succession as he saw their power tottering. As far as affairs of State were concerned, he was simply a transactor of business, without genius or enterprise. But he was a shrewd and wily politician, and well skilled in the intrigues of the court. He was not at all desirous to see a new master put over his head, and he sedulously impressed on the king's mind that if, on the one hand, he called Medina-Celi to the head of affairs, he would only exchange the slavery

under Don Juan, which he had just escaped from, for another equally stringent; and, on the other hand, if he summoned the constable and his junta to his counsels, he would soon find his own authority entirely lost in that of the queen-mother. The king's confessor and the camerera-mayor joined in and strengthened these suggestions of Don Jeronimo. The Duke de Medina-Celi meanwhile hesitated, and pretended reluctance to come forward; and only very slowly, and step by step, did he venture to put forth his pretensions. The queen-mother, on her side, showed herself little disposed to second actively the schemes of the constable and her old partisans; and, after her unsuccessful efforts with the young queen, gradually withdrew herself from meddling in State affairs. The constable perceiving this next turned to Don Jeronimo, who welcomed him as a counterpoise to Medina-Celi, though little disposed to further his ulterior views. The constable soon displayed his overbearing character to such an extent as to alarm and disgust his new allies. They then set themselves to work to revive in the king's mind the impressions against the constable which they had formerly produced. The constable, angry and indignant, tried once more to rouse the queen-mother to action by representing Medina-Celi as a mere creature of Don Juan, an agent in his injuries to her, and a participator in his feelings towards her. This coming to Medina-Celi's ears, alarmed him in his turn; and he sought an interview with the queen-mother, and, vindicating himself from the charges brought against him, professed to be only desirous of acting under her auspices. The queen-mother listened courteously to both, but remained quiescent. At length the constable, either in despair, or hoping to cause fresh mischief to his rival by an untimely proposition, or its premature accomplishment, took an opportunity of recommending to the king to call the Duke of Medina-Celi to the head of affairs.

In the midst of these intrigues, everything was neglected but private interests, and the foreign ambassadors and the nation complained more or less loudly that no business at all was attended to, and that disorder reigned paramount in every branch of the administration, and disorganization and distress in every part of the country. Day

after day the ambassadors urged their pressing demands for an answer on matters of great importance; fair promises and reiterated delays were all they obtained in reply. The galleons of Spain still returned loaded with merchandise, and with the inexhaustible wealth of the Indies. But the merchandise was anticipated and carried off to foreign nations, and the money either followed the same course or was dissipated among greedy courtiers and all the underlings of a corrupt government. The result was, that the more essential expenses of the administration could not be supplied, and the former creditors of the State having learnt to distrust all promises of repayment, there were no means of sending money for the government of Flanders, and there was the greatest difficulty in raising any for equipping four regiments of infantry, which they considered to be required at Milan, in consequence of the reported designs of the French in that quarter. It is scarcely credible that the authorities of Madrid took a moment such as this to violate the privileges of the vicinity of the French embassy by sending the officers of justice through it, with their insignia of office ostentatiously displayed. This subsequently led to a prolonged diplomatic dispute, ending, as it only could, in concession and apology on the part of Spain.

The coping-stone to this temple of legalized anarchy was put by the disorder of the currency. Spain had been inundated with base coinage, and in their attempts to deal with this evil the successive Spanish ministers, by allowing reports of their proposed projects to get abroad, and so alarming the public mind, found themselves precipitated into measures which had the effect of raising to a still greater height than before the dearness of the necessaries of life, paralyzing commerce and destroying credit throughout Spain. Don Jeronimo de Eguya, terrified at the general confusion and distress, and fearing to bear the responsibility in his own person, now suddenly shifted his policy, and advised the king to summon the Duke de Medina-Celi to the office of prime minister. The king, personally prepossessed towards the duke, readily acquiesced; and thus the latter found himself suddenly raised to that elevation which he had so long coveted without the spirit to follow up his claims. Unaccustomed to the management of State

affairs, and as indolent and self-indulgent as any other Spanish nobleman, he soon showed himself only capable of inflicting additional injury on the unhappy country, by systematic neglect of all effective measures of reform in the finances and administration. His plan was to evade as much as possible the responsibility of measures of importance by summoning juntas, or special councils of deliberation on them, and leaving the matter in their hands, for them to report upon. This they never did until after great delays, if they ever did so at all. Thus, in an important case between the President of Castile, the highest independent judicial functionary in the kingdom, and the Papal See, —a matter affecting seriously the rights of the crown, and on which Don Juan had steadily supported the constitutional position assumed by the President,—the Duke de Medina-Celi, after referring it to a junta, was only driven into a discreditable decision in favor of the pope by the policy of conciliating him as an Italian sovereign, and the peremptory tone which the court of Rome at last assumed.

No attempt was made by him to correct the flagrant malversations of the officers of the government, high and low alike; and the oppressive imposts and town-dues, levied by the corregidores and town-councils of Madrid and the other cities, increased tenfold the dearness and scarcity of provisions. The country seemed to be drained of money, and to become more and more bankrupt in credit every month; the poor were starving in that helpless abject state of passive suffering which characterizes a people long accustomed to the rule of an absolute monarch and his irresponsible ministers. They murmured a little now and then, and sometimes assembled under the windows of the palace, and shouted, "Down with the ministry! Long live the king!" But this was all; and they soon sank back again into their hopeless indolence, and perished in silence. Those in a better class of life, but of moderate means, were reduced to the greatest shifts to live from day to day; selling their disposable property, and even in some cases begging in the public streets. The scarcity and penury extended to the royal palaces. The queen's household was without money for a whole month; the king's servants stripped off their liveries and prepared to

abandon such a scene of beggary. The native population of Spain, meanwhile, demoralized and destitute of the commonest energy, abandoned to foreigners the trade and commerce of the towns. Thousands of Frenchmen from the neighboring provinces of France invaded in a peaceful fashion the fair lands of Spain, and after growing rich by undertaking the work which the natives would not, or could not, put their hands to, returned to spend their fortunes in their own country, their place being supplied by fresh swarms of hungry and industrious Frenchmen. Floods which created great devastation, and pestilence which decimated all classes, and under the ignorant treatment of the Spanish physicians proved generally fatal, added to the calamity already existing, of a grievous famine. A slight shock of earthquake increased the general alarm; the terrified people rushed into the streets in their night-attire, and the French ambassador testifies that for weeks she lived in great dread of a repetition of the shock. In the midst of this public misery the horde of speculators and extortioners flourished. Immense fortunes were amassed by them, and pensions and governorships were lavishly bestowed upon them, while the king's private and public coffers were left empty. The Duke de Medina-Celi was disgracefully pre-eminent in this favoritism and jobbing. His own palace was a scene of magnificence and opulence, which contrasted strangely with the penury of his royal master's. While he affected to be unable to raise funds to enable the king to undertake the customary journey to Aranjuez, he was enriching his family connections and friends, in all directions, at the expense of the public. Governorships, pensions, and rich marriage-alliances roused general indignation among the members of the noble houses. One marriage especially, of a young heiress of fifteen to one of the minister's creatures,—a man without merit or pretensions of any kind,—excited great disgust, and provoked the anger especially of a family closely related to the young lady,—that of the Count Oropesa. The count, a man of some ability, and a great favorite with the king, had been one of the chief agents in the elevation of Medina-Celi. But now the minister did not deign even to consult him on this marriage.

A much more strange marriage, according to our notions, effected by the minister between one of his own daughters, a girl of sixteen, and Don Pedro of Arragon, an old man of eighty, who had been twice married previously, and was the great-uncle of his bride, seems to have excited much less attention, except on the score of the bridegroom's age, and the treatment which the Marquis de Liche, ambassador at Rome, had received from that court while negotiating the dispensation for this marriage of his own uncle and his own niece. Not that the court of Rome hesitated to grant the dispensation; but they refused it to the ambassador, and sent it at the same time direct to Don Pedro, with many gracious expressions. The Marquis de Liche had been kept in a sort of honorary banishment at Rome, ruining his health and fortune, though his wife threw herself at the king's feet to implore permission for him to return. His brother, the Count de Monterey, was another very formidable rival of the Duke de Medina-Celi. He was a man of much ambition and fair ability, who had been governor of Flanders, and had much other official experience; but was particularly disliked by the duke and his confederates, who calumniated him to the king to such an extent, that when the queen petitioned in his favor, the king replied that it was well for him if he did not lose his head. The Count of Oropesa and the Count de Monterey now constituted the heads of a party which caballed secretly against the prime minister; but disagreeing among themselves, Medina-Celi for the time had an easy triumph, banishing Monterey, and dispersing or terrifying into silence all the rest. Both Oropesa and Monterey, however, were destined to play a leading part on the political stage of Spain, after the downfall of their present successful rival. The volumes we are noticing do not reach down to that event, but we see the gathering of the storm in various directions. The conduct of the duke to the queen-mother and the young queen was, to say the least, injudicious. Trying with both alternately the effects of conciliation and hostility, and endeavoring, at the artful suggestion of Don Jeronimo de Eguya, to sow dissension between them, by insinuating that each was the enemy of the other with the king, he

ultimately experienced the fate of such double-dealers in the combination of both—after a fortuitous explanation—in a resolute effort to overthrow his power.

Of the three confederates who had ruled the king and queen since the death of Don Juan, and who had submitted to the necessity of calling in the Duke de Medina-Celi, only one now remained at his post. The camerera-mayor seems to have been alarmed at the unexpected outburst of passion on the part of the queen on the occasion of the untimely death of her parrots; and feeling the danger of her position, if her young mistress were once really roused, probably struck by the adroitness with which she had contrived to excuse herself to the king, and knowing that the queen-mother never ceased to represent to the king the probable ill effects of the attempt to force strange and austere habits on a young girl accustomed to the freedom of France, she suddenly adopted an entirely different tone, and endeavored to ingratiate herself with the queen by studying her fancies, and professing to set matters right between her and the king. But it was shrewdly conjectured that she made even more mischief under this specious cover of friendly offices than by her former open ill-service. The young queen, easily impressed by the appearance of kindness, especially in one whom she had learnt to dread so much as she had the duchess, and delighted at the agreeable change in the atmosphere around her, showed evident tokens of reconciliation; and the duchess, lulled by these into security, soon forgot her newly imposed self-restraint, and gave way again to her usual *hauteur* and austerity in a still more exaggerated form. The queen at length, driven to desperation, followed the advice of her mother-in-law, and one evening, after lavishing more than usual tokens of affection on her husband, entreated him to remove the camerera-mayor. The king received the idea with his usual nonchalance, and replied that she might have her wish; but that he counselled her to be very careful in choosing the successor, as she would not, under any circumstances, be allowed to change again. Whether or not the king knew this choice of a successor to be a considerable difficulty, the effect of this condition was that the queen, after consulting the Duke de Medina-Celi and the queen-mother,

and endeavoring in vain to find a person acceptable to them both and to herself, resigned herself once more to the tutelage of the Duchess de Terra-Nova. This lady had been warned by her friend the confessor of what was going on against her; but as nothing practical resulted, she underrated the danger, and only joined the confessor (who had always been on unpleasant terms with the duke) in endeavoring to undermine the premier in the king's estimation. The confessor, Father Francisco de Reluz, went at length so far as to tell the king that unless he seriously attended to the grievances of the nation, caused by the maladministration of the duke, he would not grant him absolution. The poor monarch, exceedingly distressed and perplexed, with a simplicity in unison with his intellectual calibre, complained to the duke himself that he was going to lose the benefits of absolution because the duke would not do justice to the nation. The duke re-assured his master, and represented that everything was going on in the best way possible, and that the confessor was only seeking to establish a mental tyranny over him. The result, as we might well suppose, was, that the confessor was at once dismissed from his post and banished from the court. The fall of the Duchess de Terra-Nova soon followed. The queen at length made up her mind to accept the Duchess de Albuquerque as her new camerera-mayor, and, with but a short premonitory warning the old camerera-mayor received the king's orders to resign her post. She still hoped that the king would relent on her actually making the proposal to him; but when after supper she asked permission to retire, he at once acquiesced, and went off to his bed with as tranquil an air as if nothing particular had occurred. The next morning the ex-camerera-mayor went to bid farewell to the queen. She said she regretted she had not been able to be of so much service to the queen as she had wished, preserving as she spoke an unmoved countenance, though the gentle young queen melted into tears of sorrow, and only haughtily remarking thereupon that it did not become a queen of Spain to weep for so little a matter. She preserved the same proud bearing with the other ladies of the household, who were all in tears, real or affected; and merely remarked that the queen had now a camerera-

mayor who would serve her better. When they asked her if she would not visit the palace now and then, she replied that she would never set foot in it again, but would shut herself up in her own house till she departed to a better place. This is the account given by the French ambassador; Madame d'Aulnoy, giving its substance so far, adds, that the duchess concluded her speech by striking a table near her twice with her hand, and then seizing a very beautiful china fan, she broke it in two, and throwing it on the ground, trampled it under her feet. It was proposed, in order to soften the blow, to allow her to retain her apartments in the palace and the honors of her rank there, and to bestow the order of the Toison d'Or on one of her family, and a vice-royalty on another; but she proudly refused all compensation, and quitted the palace in the triumphant pride of injured innocence. She must have been a woman above the common, and Madame de Villars, who had little reason to admire her, says that the change only pleased her on the queen's account. Two hours after the departure of the duchess, her successor was installed in the palace, and a great change for the better took place in the queen's daily life. One by one she obtained the relaxation of the ceremonial restraints which had pressed most heavily on her. She now was allowed to ride on horseback as much as she liked, and with her usual thoughtless self-indulgence, she abused this privilege so as to bring on an illness from excessive and unusual exercise. On one occasion she was thrown from her horse in the courtyard of the palace, and dragged along by one foot in the stirrup; the king looking on in an agony of terror from a window, and none of the courtiers daring to approach her, as it was a high offence to touch the queen's person, particularly her foot. At length two young courtiers ventured on the breach of etiquette, and then immediately hastened to their homes, saddled their horses, and prepared for instant flight. The young queen was luckily unhurt, and a friend of her rescuers approaching her, entreated her interference with the king in their behalf. She easily obtained their pardon, and ever afterwards distinguished them with her marked favor. This new dawn of happiness was sometimes, it is true, overcast by the machinations of the Duke de Medina-Celi and

Don Jeronimo de Eguya; but gradually the clouds cleared away, and the king himself learnt to take as much delight in her pretty dancing as Madame de Sévigné and the French ambassadress.

Don Jeronimo de Eguya was now the real master of the political situation. He had intrigued with the confessor and camereramayor against the Duke de Medina-Celi, but much more cautiously than they; and seeing the time not ripe for the fall of the minister, he insinuated himself more and more into his confidence, and by relieving the indolent duke from the routine work of the administration, gradually from being his tool became his master, and misgoverned Spain under the shelter of his name. We have spoken of the distress caused by the excessive town-dues levied at the gates by and for the benefit of the corregidores and other officials. A proposal by one Marco Diaz to take these imposts in farm, and pay the king so much a year, reducing at the same time the dues, a proposal from which the people expected much, came to nothing by the sudden and suspicious death of the author, who had been violently threatened by several of those who profited by the corruptions at which he was striking. A junta of council was afterwards constituted to examine into the causes of the distress; but they, of course, sat and sat and did nothing, the grantees being too much interested in the plunder of the State to allow any real reformation. The governor of Valencia who ventured to bring an apostate monk to justice for robbing on the highway, was removed from his post, and when he reiterated his demand for a trial was banished. On the other hand, the viceroy of Sicily openly disobeyed the repeated orders of the king, and escaped with impunity from being a connection of the Duke de Medina-Celi. The Inquisition, in the midst of this scene of national decay and corruption, held its periodical *auto-da-fé* at Madrid. A party of Jews, heretics, and unbelievers, gathered from the prisons of the holy office, were first forced through the mockery of a public examination in the presence of the king and queens, the court, and all Madrid; and when they held with manly firmness to their convictions (some of the Jews raising the admiration of the French ambassador by the skill and force of their answers to the igno-

rant monks who beset them), they were most of them dragged to a lingering and horrible death, of which the fire constituted the most merciful feature. The atrocious conduct of the attendant monks in torturing and wounding the helpless prisoners as they hurried them along excites the horror and reprobation of M. de Villars. The king and queens were compelled by etiquette to be present. One young Jewish girl of seventeen, whose beauty excited general remark, finding herself by the side of the young queen, implored her intercession for one whose faith had been imbibed with her mother's milk. The young queen heard her with deep pity, but turned away her face, not daring to breathe a syllable in her behalf. The ambassador sums up the moral of this abominable scene by telling us that here also the professed interests of true religion were subordinated to corruption. The Jews who perished were those only who were too poor to purchase their safety; rich Jews in abundance flourished in all the cities, paying heavy toll to these extortioners for their impunity. They filled many of the high offices of the State, and about this time one of them even attained, for a large sum, the title of marquis.

Corruption and cruelty, under the hypocritical guise of zeal for religion, thus reigning paramount at home, it cannot be supposed that the foreign relations of Spain were more prosperous. The Elector of Brandenburg, unable to obtain payment of a large sum due to him, withdrew his ambassador, and openly stated that he should make reprisals. He accordingly seized some Spanish ships laden with the riches of the West, and then offered to return them when he got his own money. The French king took compensation for attacks on his subjects by the inhabitants of Majorca in a similar manner. The court of Spain actually preferred this mode of repaying their debts to any other, and took no steps to release the captures. The frontier river of France and Spain was the scene

of repeated Spanish humiliations in respect of disputed rights of fisheries; the French king, after having vainly expostulated on certain breaches of the treaty, taking here also the redress into his own hands. Even Portugal, so recently a province of Spain, seized and destroyed a town belonging to the latter in the New World; and on reprisals being made by the Spanish governor, threatened an invasion of Spain, and actually assembled an army for the purpose. Here again the Spanish court, after some miserable shuffling, had to give way,—no money for an army being obtainable,—and to apologise for an act provoked by a wrong against itself. Beggars at home and dishonored abroad, the Spanish grandees still thought themselves above the level of all other nations, and constantly increased the number of their humiliations by repeated acts of arrogance and childish insult to their more powerful neighbors.

But here we must drop the curtain on a scene of unparalleled national degradation. The fate of the young queen was a tragic one. She died in 1689 in a most painful and unaccountable manner, the symptoms resembling, it is said, those which accompanied the more than suspicious death of her beautiful mother. The fate of the king has been told by Lord Macaulay, and we need not repeat the melancholy story. But when he descended, in the last stage of his decay of mental and physical powers, into the mausoleum of the Escorial, and the whim seized him to have the coffins of his ancestors, and among others that of his young queen, opened, she was disclosed to his eyes, according to the historian Ortiz, in all the untarnished pride of her early beauty, with the bloom of life still upon her cheek. "I shall soon be with her in heaven!" he exclaimed, and hurried from the spot. Such was the last meeting on earth of the prince and princess of whose early married life we have endeavored to give some account.

CHAPTER V. THE PASSING-BELL.

"AND his son? Mr. Wilford arrived in time? All was made up between them?" Violet asked, with anxiety.

The doctor shook his head mournfully.

"Poor Mr. Wilford!" she went on. "How sad this will make him. Surely, he deserved to be forgiven. Surely, his long absence from home was sufficient atonement for all his early faults and misdeeds. But perhaps he did not arrive in time?"

"They met," said Mr. Fuller; "it may be that it would have been better if they had not. I never thought the old man would have been so hard with him. I really believed, in spite of all he said beforehand, that he would relent when he saw his son. I am sure the sight of him was enough to soften any one. Poor Wilford."

"Has he changed much since he went away? Is he ill?"

"I never saw any man so altered. You recollect how gay and handsome and frank he was, seven years ago? You were quite a child, Vi, then, but still I think you must remember him. I know he was very good and kind to you children—very fond of you—always ready to romp with you; why, he gave Madge almost her first doll, you remember. Poor fellow! what trouble he took about it, sending up to London expressly for it. Now, he looks years and years older, so thin and gaunt, all his old bright manner gone. Such a worn, white face, such wild-looking eyes, such long, tangled hair and beard. Poor Wilford! I never saw any one so wrecked and broken and wretched."

"He was always a favorite of yours, father."

"He is so still, Vi. I can't help it. I did all I could for him in that dreadful business years ago. I never understood it clearly, but I take for granted that the current story about his quarrel with his father was the true one. The old man was furious then, and he remained unforgiving to the last. Yet I am certain the poor boy must have had deep and cruel provocation. He was always violent and headstrong, and very passionate. Both father and mother spoilt him so when he was a child. Yet I am sure he is of a kind and affectionate na-

ture—I am sure he had in his heart great sorrow, great love for his father."

"Was the old man sensible when they met? Did he know his son?"

"Yes, they were a long time together, holding quite a long conversation; I was in hopes that all was going well between them. Then suddenly Wilford came out of the room, trembling very much, and said his father was taken seriously ill, and that I had better go in to him. I found him scarcely sensible. He had been over-exerting himself evidently; he was gasping for breath, half-fainting, with a painful palsy upon every limb. God knows what had passed between them! I fear there must have been a terrible scene. I cannot conceive how the father could have hardened his heart against his son. I feel sure that, intentionally, Wilford could have said nothing to give new offence. Yet something must have made the father very angry. He had intended to relent it seemed; he had made a new will, much more favorable, I imagine, to his eldest son than the will he has left, and which must of course be acted upon. But he cancelled the new disposition of his property in Wilford's presence: tore it into shreds, and flung it about the room. All chance of reconciliation was then over forever—indeed, I hardly thought the old man would have lived five minutes; but he has certainly a wonderful constitution. They are a fine family, the Hadfields. Poor old Colonel Hugh was just such another as this one. He rallied again, and then dozed for some time, but in a very feverish, restless way. I did not like his looks again at all when he woke; he was terribly changed. I was then sure that the worst must be very, very near. Yet he was sensible; with just a slight indication to the contrary when he said to me, in a low voice, 'Somehow I can't rouse my mind, doctor; do I wander when I talk? If I stop, repeat my last word to me, that I may remember what I want to say.' A grand old man! It seemed to me that he was holding his intellects together by mere force of will, as it were. And when he stopped, hesitating, I believe it was quite as much from difficulty of articulation as loss of memory. But he grew weaker; I could see that every minute told upon him. 'Has he gone?' he asked; 'has he gone?' And he seized my arm.

'Mr. Wilford?' I said. 'Hush! don't name him,' he whispered, frowning angrily. Once I thought he was relenting, he was muttering, 'Poor boy! poor boy!' but he never mentioned his son's name, and seemed at last to dismiss all thought of him forever from his mind. It was getting on for dawn now; his pulse was hardly perceptible. He turned to Stephen, and said, 'Steenie, my *only* son,' laying stress upon his words; 'bring them in—Gertrude and the children, it's time I said good-by to them.' Poor Stephen went out, crying dreadfully—he has been a good son to him, has Stephen—and he brought in his wife, and the children, little Agnes and Saxon. But the poor old man was past further speaking; his lips moved, but there was no sound audible. He kissed his daughter-in-law affectionately, and his grandchildren. Poor little things! They were lifted up to kiss the dying man, and were dreadfully scared and puzzled at the whole business; such looks of wonder in their pretty round eyes! A very sad leave-taking. Then Stephen brought Wilford again into the room. It was a last chance. He could scarcely stand, he was so weak and so painfully moved. Once I thought the old man, as his eyes wandered round the room, recognized his eldest son, but I couldn't be sure. I had my hand on his wrist all the while; the pulse grew faint, very faint, then ceased altogether. His other hand was round Stephen's neck. So he left us—a smile upon his lips, and a kind look in his eyes. Seventy-two years of age. It was more like going to sleep than dying. He looked so grand and handsome, it was difficult to believe that he died cruel and relentless and unforgiving."

"Poor Mr. Wilford!" Violet repeated, her beautiful eyes dim with tears.

"Poor fellow! It is indeed sad for him; and he's terribly shaken by it. He looks very ill, and he seems utterly careless of himself. I fear he has been living rather wildly and recklessly during his long absence. There is much to be said for him, however; he was very young when he went away. I never can bring myself to the belief that he was other than hardly treated. This has been a terrible trial for him. I hope it may be for his good. I hope that he may be able to bear it—at present I

have my fears. I don't like his looks at all, in fact."

"Do you think he is ill?—dangerously ill?"

"He's in a very bad state of health. I doubt if he has sufficient strength, either of mind or body, to support the shock this must be to him. He is, as it were, stunned by the blow. He moves about like a man in a dream. It is quite pitiful to see him. The great, strong, strapping fellow he was! Now he trembles as he walks; he is bent like an old man; his limbs yield under him; he stares when you address him as though he could not grasp your words; and the tears come into his eyes when he attempts to speak; he eats nothing—I am afraid he has been in the habit of supporting himself too much by recourse to stimulants; he sits shivering by the fire, so close as almost to burn his clothes. And it seems he fainted last night—once out in the garden, after his interview with his father; Stephen found him on the ground, half covered with snow—and again this morning, when he became conscious that the old man was indeed dead. I don't like his looks at all."

"Poor Mr. Wilford!"

A quick footstep outside, and Madge hurries into the room.

"O papa, here's your handkerchief; I quite forgot to give it you. I've been out in the garden; it's such fun. The snow is quite over one's boots, and there's an icicle, oh, ever so long, hanging from the pump. Oh, and papa, I want you to come with me into the fowl-house; I *do* think that poor old speckled hen whom I always called the Lady Mayoress, because she was such a pompous, strutting old thing, you know, I *do* think she's—why, Vi, what *is* the matter? Why, you've been crying—oh, I'm sure you have. What is the matter? And papa, why, how solemn *you* look."

"Hush, my dear," said the doctor; "not so much noise. A very solemn thing has happened. Poor old Mr. Hadfield, of the Grange, is dead. Yes, it's very sad; and I think, Vi, you had better draw down all the blinds. It will only be a proper mark of respect to the bereaved family. I am sure all the shutters in Grilling Abbots will be closed when the sad news becomes known."

The poor old man, whatever his faults, has been very kind to all about the estate, and many a poor fellow hereabouts has lost a good friend by his death. Was that some one ringing the surgery-bell? I'll go and see myself. Don't keep your boots on, Madge, if they're wet; and there'll be hardly any more going out to-day."

"Don't cry, Vi, dear;" and kind Madge kisses her sister. Not boisterously this time, but with much quiet tenderness. "How dreadful death is, isn't it, Vi?" And then poor Madge cannot help crying too.

The news had soon reached Grilling Abbots. The butcher, calling for orders early in the morning, had learnt of poor Mr. Hadfield's death from the housekeeper. He was the first to bring the mournful intelligence into the town. He beat William Ostler—who heard of it from Groom Frank—out with his horses for a morning exercise—he beat William Ostler by about ten minutes. Of course the butcher, hurrying back, yet found time to stop every one he met, and jerk out of himself—he was not a conversationalist, and speech was always with him rather a matter of effort—the simple announcement, "Poor old gen'leman's gone." But the few words were sufficient for the occasion. So far as Grilling Abbots was concerned there was but one poor old gen'leman who could go. Everybody said that it was only to be expected, and that no one ought to be surprised; and yet somehow all looked as though they had not expected it, and were surprised. The old sexton—what a shrivelled mummy of a man he was, in his wide-rimmed hat and long-skirted rusty great-coat! his granddaughters (it was thoughtful of them, for the morning was bitterly cold) had wound a comforter of great length many times round his neck, so that little of his face was visible—the old sexton was seen wending his way to the church, swinging the keys in his hand. "I didn't think I should have to toll for him, and he a good six years older nor me; I thought the colonel would have been the last of the Hadfields I should ever have tolled for. I suppose we'll have funeral sermon next Sunday; most likely; I warrant Parson wont leave a dry eye in town afore he's done with 'em. Poor old gen'leman! And only seventy-two—quite

a young man one may say, little better nor in his prime."

Within an hour and a half it was known at Mowle. Old Mr. Bartlett—(firm of Parkinson, Bartlett, & Co.; but old Mr. Parkinson has been dead some years, and his son, who nominally represents the head of the firm, is not thought much of as a lawyer, though highly esteemed by all Mowle as a cricketer; indeed, he is one of the Uplandshire eleven gentlemen-players),—old Mr. Bartlett seemed quite startled by the news; he said, "God bless me!" three times over, as his manner was when much disturbed, and fell to pondering which of the two wills he had prepared for the late Mr. Hadfield would be carried into execution. The long will made some years before, twelve foolscap sheets, settled by Mr. Spinbury (Equity Draughtsman and Conveyancer, 34 Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, called to the bar in '19): or the short will of a very little while ago, when the testator had asked so many questions as to the effect of cancelling wills, etc. Somehow Mr. Bartlett seemed to desire that the long will should be the one to be carried out; it was an admirable will, beautifully drawn, quite a work of art in its way, and on twelve foolscap sides; what a pity to make waste paper of such a will as that! Well, yes, perhaps, as a will, it was hard upon the elder son; perhaps it was *that*, and Mr. Bartlett prepared himself for a summons to the Grange. At the undertaker's, too, Mr. Tressell's there was some excitement. Mr. Tressell knew that his services would be required; he was the only undertaker for miles round, and already he commenced to busy himself amongst his sable properties and paraphernalia. Would it be a grand funeral? Perhaps very much on the plan of Colonel Hugh's. Simple, but substantial, merely the family at the Grange as mourners, with the addition, of course, of the doctor and the lawyer. Perhaps two mourning coaches would be sufficient, with four horses, of course; though he should have preferred three, if not four, coaches. The more the better. What funerals always wanted was length. Give them *length*, and the effect was certain; and soon, and involuntarily, he commenced rubbing up the brass tips of his baton. A highly respectable man, and a good and

moral in his way. Yet somehow, one has a sort of shrinking from a trade that makes all its money out of mortality, that lives by death: I don't think I should ever like a child of mine to be a coffin-maker. What is he to know of the awe of the grave, who cannot but identify it with such details as bronze nails, white satin lining, silver handles and plate, etc.? And the old rector, too, the Reverend Edward Mainstone, was he to feel nothing at the loss of his old parishioner—had he no duties to perform on the sad occasion? The dead man had been his very good friend for many long years; there had been one or two quarrels between them; both were a little hot and obstinate and proud; "high and mighty" was the Grilling Abbots description of the chronic state of mind of the two old gentlemen; but these disagreements had not been very lasting. If the rector could charge some faults to the debit of old Mr. Hadfield, he could bring many good qualities to his credit. How could he regard reproachfully for any long time, one who was so persistently kind to the poor on his estates, who rebuilt cottages, who distributed coals and blankets so liberally in the winter, who repaired the church, including the chancel, entirely at his own cost? The rector lamented the death of his old friend deeply. Indeed the old feel always the loss of their contemporaries very much. In youth, perhaps, we can afford to waste and lose both our friends and our money; in age we needs must be economical with regard to both. We are past making new friendships or earning more money. The Reverend Edward Mainstone, too, had a duty to perform.

"They will expect me to mention it on Sunday," he said. "I'd rather not. I feel my heart will hardly let me speak upon the subject. Yet, I suppose, I must. One thing," he added, with a sad smile, "any commonplace will do. The poor souls will only be too ready with their tears. They loved, though they feared him, while he lived. They will only love him now. My dear old friend!"

And the rector's eyes were very dim just then.

"Let me see," he said. "What did I say when the poor colonel was taken from us? Let me look out that sermon."

There was only one drawback to the gen-

eral grief of the neighborhood at the death of Mr. Hadfield of the Grange. It soon began to be bruited about that Mr. Wilford, the eldest son, was disinherited. It would be vain to ask how this fact became known, even before the funeral and the formal reading of the will by the family solicitor. But the world must be, by this time, pretty well aware that the occurrences of the drawing-room and parlor do not take place without the cognizance of the butler's pantry and the kitchen. When we begin to have servants, we leave off possessing secrets. We live in glass houses; we throw ourselves open to public inspection, like so many picture-galleries. You have only to get a ticket from Thomas or James, and you can walk round and examine us as though we belonged to you. It is a servant's privilege to have the most notable circumstances in his employer's biography at his fingers' ends, and to be able to comment upon them boldly and freely. Does the Oriental plan answer? Do the mute servitors refrain from revealing by gesticulations and the dumb alphabet the secrets of their employers? I doubt it. Certainly the occidental servants use their tongues enough, and if those organs were removed, I believe they would yet manage—perhaps with their toes—to narrate of their masters, and to canvass their conduct. Say that the servants of the Grange knew all about their late master's will, and then there will be no wonder that all the good folks of Grilling Abbots were well acquainted with it too. And, be it told, they disapproved the testator's disposition of his property. Conservatism was very strong in Grilling Abbots. They had entirely orthodox views concerning the rights of primogeniture. They deemed it only right that estates should descend from father to son in one uninterrupted line. They could not understand this cutting off the lawful heir. And they sympathized with Mr. Wilford, and were very sorry for him. He might have been a bit wild, they admitted; but what then? A good many of the Hadfields had been a bit wild in their youth, and what harm had come of it, after all? Nothing to speak of. And he was much more like the old Hadfields—the living image of the pater in the long room at the Grange, of the Hadfield as went to Indy—they would call it Indy,—

much more like the old Hadfields than Mr. Stephen, who was a nice civil-spoken gentleman to be sure, they all admitted; but not so much of a Hadfield as Mr. Wilford—no—and not the eldest son either.

Before a roaring fire in the library Mr. Wilford sat scorching his thin white face. Mr. Tressell was up-stairs. He was consulting with, and taking instructions from, Stephen as to the funeral. Stephen had endeavored to interest his elder brother in these proceedings; indeed, had appeared anxious to cede to him the chief place in the household. But Wilford had declined all intervention.

"Do what you think best, Steenie. I am sure what you do will be right. I cannot counsel you. Indeed I am useless here. But you are the master of the Grange. I cannot think or speak. My head is so heavy, and I cannot get warm. Would I were dead! Let them bring me some more wine."

He had not spoken so much since the death of the old man. Stephen led Gertrude to him.

"Say something to him, Gertrude," he whispered to her. "Try and rouse him from this torpor he has fallen into. Try and comfort him."

A calm, handsome, blonde woman, with long, flowing skirts, Gertrude Hadfield, approached her brother-in-law. She was very elegant and refined. Perhaps these qualities necessitate a certain reticence, if not an absence of feeling. Yet in her impassive way she was deeply attached to her husband and her children, and she had been a favorite with the late Mr. Hadfield. She brought her children with her, and stooped before Wilford.

"Be comforted, brother," she said to him in a soft voice. He looked at her with a wan smile.

"Steenie's wife," he murmured, "and his children. How old this makes one seem!"

"Go, Saxon," she said to her baby son, "go and kiss your uncle."

"I don't like to," cried the boy. "I'm afraid."

"What? Why I'm quite ashamed of you. What will be thought of you? Not kiss poor Uncle Wilford?"

"Don't," said Wilford, with a dark frown, "don't teach them *that*. Don't teach them

what they'll have to unlearn in a week. They mustn't call *me* uncle. Never, never. I am no more a Hadfield!"

The poor lady, rather terrified, shrunk back with her children.

"What does he mean?" she asked herself. "Is he mad?"

"Mamma," said one of the children, "why is the room so dark?—why mayn't we open the shutters?—why mayn't we play at horses?"

"Hush, Agnes: don't ask such questions, or I must ring for nurse. Come away."

CHAPTER VI. CRAPE.

THE passing bell ceased to toll. The family vault of the Hadfields in the old Norman church of Grilling Abbots was opened and closed again. The Rev. Edward Mainstone preached a funeral sermon—only half audible though—for every now and then his words were merged and lost in his genuine sobs and emotion; but still sufficient was heard to move his whole congregation to tears. Perhaps very little was needed to do that. A neat tablet was erected in the church—white marble bordered with black, like a sheet of deep mourning note-paper, with an inscription, "*Sacred to the memory of George Richard Saxon Carew Hadfield, late of this parish, who departed this life,*" and so on. The old sexton would stand contemplating this tablet for hours. People now began to tap their foreheads, and raise their eyebrows, and nod mysteriously when they spoke of the sexton. Mr. Joyce of the George had even ventured to say that, in his opinion, the sexton "had gone downright cracked!" but this was in a free moment, late in the evening, after the rummers had been filled up rather frequently; and he was reproved, if not punished, by his wife for so strong and unwarrantable an assertion. "*Aged seventy-two,*" the sexton would mumble over and over again. "A mere boy—a mere boy. To think that I should live to see his funeral—to see *that* put up here. I thought the old colonel had been the last. *Late of this parish*—don't it say? My eyesight aint what it was. Yes, *of this parish*, and a deal of good he's done for it, in his time, as I can bear witness. A good old gentleman. God bless him for it! God bless

him!" And he turned away, the keys jingling in his trembling hand. Mr. Tressell had been quite satisfied with the funeral. "Very nice and gentlemanly," he said, as he rewrapped the baton, with the brass tips, in silver-paper. "Very nice indeed. But you may always trust the county families for that," he went on; "they understand burying. You may always tell a gentleman by his funeral. Well, perhaps it would have been better if the chief mourner had clean shaved. A beard at a burying *was* out of place, strictly speaking. It gave a furrin air to the thing. Still it was nice and gentlemanly on the whole." Others beside Mr. Tressell had commented upon the appearance of the late Mr. Hadfield's elder son. "*That* Mr. Wilford?" they said. "How old looking!—only eight-and-twenty? Why, he looks forty, at least! And how white that dreadful crape makes his face look! Poor young man! He must be very ill—very much cut up—very disappointed perhaps,—ah! most likely that was it." So Grilling Abbots commented; and old Mr. Bartlett (of the firm of Parkinson, Bartlett, & Co.) was re-assured. The short will had been destroyed—the long will was left in force. He was sorry for the elder son, of course. Still it would have been a thousand pities to have thrown away, to have made waste paper, absolutely waste paper, of a will so perfectly, so beautifully drawn as that had been, and settled by Mr. Spinbury, of Old Square. And Mr. Bartlett rubbed his plump white hands together until his mourning rings glittered like diamonds.

At the Grange the shutters were thrown open again, and the clear winter light once more poured in at the windows. Stephen's children in deep mourning, were permitted to resume their games at horses; but with a proviso that they did not make too much noise, or in any way annoy their Uncle Wilford.

"Mamma, is he really our uncle?" lisped little Agnes.

"Yes, yes, of course he is," answers mamma, rather frightened lest the question should have been overheard.

"Then why doesn't he give us things like our other uncles? Why doesn't he kiss us more, and play with us, and tell us fairy stories?"

"Hush, Agnes,—because Uncle Wilford's not well, because he's very sad and sorry. By and by he'll be better, I dare say, and then he'll play with you as long as you like."

"Ah," remarks the young lady with a premature wisdom, "if he's ill he oughtn't to drink so much wine, and nurse thinks so too."

"Be quiet, Agnes; you must never say such rude things."

"O mamma, do look at Saxon—what a mess he's made his new crape in!"

The family had assembled in the large drawing-room after the funeral to hear the will read. The children, marvelling what could be the meaning of this unusual conclave, disturbed its peace by intermittent kicking at the door, greatly to Mrs. Stephen's displeasure, who inveighed loudly against the ceaseless negligence of modern nurses.

"Jeffries, do keep the children up-stairs and quiet for half an hour," she said in tones, for her, almost peremptory.

"Saxon, you don't know where grand-papa's gone to—I do," Miss Agnes remarks, with an air of wisdom.

"Where then, miss? You don't know," answers little Saxon, offended at this assumption of superior information.

"Up there—in the skies, higher than ever I can throw my ball. See"—and she suits the action to the word.

"Will *he* come down again?" asks the little boy, as he sees the ball fall.

The subject is too vast for his early intelligence to cover, and Miss Agnes can render him no assistance. She dismisses the topic, or moves, perhaps, the previous question with the words,—

"Be my horse, Sax," and soon there is a sound of little feet tramping in the hall.

Mr. Bartlett reads the will, rather pompously, holding up his gold-rimmed double eye-glasses. It is a tiresome business. Mrs. Stephen quite loses her way in it before the first page has been turned. Stephen looks bewildered. Wilford leans his head on his hands, and crouches by the fire: he seems abstracted, and very cold. He shivers now and then, when his teeth quite chatter. Mrs. Stephen has soon given up the thing as hopeless. She passes the time in listening to the children, and endeavoring to guess at their proceedings. They

are very quiet now. How she trusts that they are at no mischief! They are noisy again now—how noisy! She can barely hear Mr. Bartlett's voice. She grows quite hot and uncomfortable. What a noise! How fast they are running! Oh, if Agnes should hurt herself! Oh, if Saxon were to fall down! Is there to be no end to the will—and what does it all mean?

Mr. Bartlett glanced at Wilford when the reading was finished.

"He takes it very quietly," said the lawyer to himself. "Does he understand it? 'Cut off with a shilling;' that I suppose would be the popular description of the eldest son's position. It seems cruel, but of course a man has a right to do what he likes with his own, or else what would be the use of will-making? Still there's almost a case for him. He might try to upset the will—its provisions do seem to be a little unnatural. Was the testator sane when he executed it? The date some years back—sane? As sane as any man in the county—no evidence to go to the jury—eccentric perhaps—a little, now and then. But I don't think it would be possible to color that into madness. Yet he might try. If I were in his shoes I should. The judges don't like upsetting wills, but we needn't go so far as that. We might settle the case out of court. If I were he, I should attempt a compromise, and commence legal proceedings—that of course. They have a wonderful effect sometimes, have legal proceedings, especially in families; all the women get up *en masse*. Oh, don't let it go into the newspapers! Divide the money—anything! Yes, if he were well advised he might get very good terms—very good indeed—an exceedingly nice slice of the Hadfield property. But, of course, it isn't for Parkinson, Bartlett, & Co. to make any stir in the matter. They indeed would probably be engaged on the other side—on behalf of the family—in support of the will."

And Mr. Bartlett smilingly contemplated a long and charming vista of legal proceedings, paved with bills of cost, the Lord Chancellor in the extreme distance giving judgment on an appeal to the House of Lords in the suit of Hadfield and Hadfield.

What a beautiful tree of litigation and entanglement he pictured to himself growing out of the long will settled by Mr.

Spinbury of Old Square! But he had to snap off his day-dream quite short, for it was growing dark—a glass of sherry and a biscuit to refresh himself after his long labors, and then to be driven back to Mowle in his hired fly. Again he glanced at Wilford, but he made no sign.

"He'll think it over, and I dare say I shall hear something definite in a few days. When he wakes up to-morrow and finds himself a beggar, why, he won't like it—and—and he'll act accordingly."

The remark was cautious, if vague. Mr. Bartlett muttered on his way homewards. He was meditating an item in his attendance-book.

"Let me see. 3d January. To long attendance reading over the will of the late G. R. S. C. Hadfield to the family, and explaining the different points thereof, when we pointed out the immediate effect of the provisions of the will and the various contingencies arising therefrom, and long conference thereupon. Engaged four and a half hours, about, let us say, five; two guineas? I think I might say three. There's plenty of money in the case. Ah! and add—hire of fly to the Grange and back, what will that be? Eight and six, perhaps,—well, we'll say a guinea. No one can complain of that."

Mr. Bartlett gone, Mrs. Stephen with a thankful heart hurried to her children. She found Saxon with his face puckered up, from a strong inclination to cry, and his knees very red from a recent fall. But there was no material harm done.

Stephen advanced to his brother.

"You heard the will?" he asked. Wilford nodded.

"I regret the terms of it very much," said Stephen, "for I feel that an injustice has been done to you. But indeed this need make no difference, really. The Grange is yours, if you will have it. During our lives it shall be the home of both of us, as it was, years ago, in our boyhood. All that the will gives me shall be quite as much yours as mine, brother. There has been no difference between us—ever. Let there be none now."

"You are very generous, Stephen, but—"

"Had there been no will, brother, you would have welcomed me, I'm sure. You

would have opened your doors to me—you would have bade me make your house my home. There is alteration in words, but there is little change in fact—only it is for me, now, to do what you would have done then. Come, Wilford, look up—be consoled—make the Grange your home—look upon the Hadfield lands as your own—they shall be as much yours as mine, and if there is need for form in the matter, why we'll have a lawyer in, and make the matter secure with parchment and sealing-wax."

"You are very kind, Stephen, but indeed this must not be. The estates are yours—honestly yours—"

"Then may I not do what I will with them?" Stephen interrupted. "May I not share them with you, Wil?"

"No, Stephen. There's a duty to be considered in the matter. Are we not bound to obey our father's will? If he pleased to leave his property with the express view of my receiving no benefit from it, are we justified in seeking to evade his determination? No. I was disobedient enough while he lived, let me at least obey him now that he is dead."

"But it was a mere freak, Wilford—an impulse of passion against you which, had he lived, he would have sorely repented of, and made you amends for."

"I cannot think so, Steenie," the elder brother said, sorrowfully. "The will was made deliberately enough, years ago. Had he no opportunity of altering its provisions, do you think, in all that time? Well, he had, and he did alter them. He made a new will, restoring me to my position as his eldest son. He saw me—Heaven knows what new wrong there was to him in my presence, or what he wished me to say or do more than I said and did. But he cast me off anew—he destroyed the new will before my face; he told me that not one halfpenny of his money should I ever touch: he forbade me to look upon myself as his son. Let it be so. Let me never receive a fraction of benefit from his property—let me no more be accounted his son or your brother."

Wilford spoke almost fiercely at last, and his manner rather alarmed Stephen.

"What will you do, Wilford?"

"Leave here at once—to-day—to-morrow—as soon as I feel a little better and stronger. I don't know how it is, but I am

strangely shattered and broken of late. I am so weak that I can barely stand, and I tremble all over. My throat is so parched and burning, and such strange things dance before my eyes, that I feel at times quite giddy, as though my brain were going. But this will wear off. Then I quit this place forever."

"Where will you go?"

"God knows. It will matter little. I will turn my back upon Grilling Abbots forever. They shall never write up my name in the church—never hear more of me. Far away where I drop down there let them bury me—a stranger. Don't fear that I will bring further shame on the name; for, indeed, I will cease to bear it any longer. Let it go with the estates. Why should I rob you and you children? What right have I to plunder them of their portions—honestly and lawfully theirs. It must not be. I will go from here very shortly, a stranger, never to return. Your children need never know that such a person has ever lived. They will soon forget me, and more need never be told them. Indeed, there will be nothing more to tell. I shall have gone away like that old ancestor of ours,—never to come back,—never to be heard of more."

"But how will you live?"

"For that matter there will be money enough under our mother's will, Steenie, to keep body and soul together, and perhaps the sooner they part company the better. I shall not starve. How cold I am. Put another log on, Steenie. This dreadful thirst! Let them bring me something to drink—water—anything."

"What has he been saying?" asked Gertrude, anxiously, as she encountered her husband on his quitting Wilford.

"He talks in a strange way; insists upon leaving the Grange at once—forever, he says."

Gertrude could hardly suppress an exclamation of the relief she felt. Indeed, she was fairly frightened at Wilford's gloomy manner and wild looks, both on the children's account and her own.

"Is he sane, Ste, do you think?" she inquired.

Stephen mused over this question.

"I have sometimes thought," he said, after a pause, "that his mind was rather affected with all that has passed. Certainly

he has a strange look now and then. Yet there was nothing like insanity in what he said. It must be owned though," in a lower tone, "that he drinks much more than he should. He will kill himself if he goes on in this way, and I'm afraid the servants will get talking about him down in the village. Give orders for my horse to be brought round."

"Where are you going, Ste?"

"I'll have a talk with old Fuller about him."

"Take care how you go. The road is very slippery."

"I'll ride the bay; he's very sure-footed. Never fear, Gertrude."

And Stephen set off. His wife determining that, during his absence, she would be careful to prevent the children going too near their Uncle Wilford. For she had made up her mind that he was clearly out of his mind, and perhaps dangerous—people out of their minds often were.

Vi and Madge, at work in the snug front parlor of Mr. Fuller's pretty white cottage, perceived a horseman advancing along the road that led from the Grange. Of course they began to speculate, after the manner of dwellers in the country, as to who this could be coming along, and what he could possibly want.

"A man all in black on a bay horse; why, it must be one of the Hadfield people," said Madge. "How slowly he comes along. The road is like glass just there. Do you see, the poor horse can hardly keep his feet."

"It's Stephen Hadfield. Why, he's coming here."

"Don't you think he's very handsome, Vi?"

"Pretty well. They're a handsome family, the Hadfields, and Stephen is good and gentlemanly looking; but yet, somehow, a little *tame*, I think. He has not the marked features of the others. I don't think he's so handsome as his father was; or, indeed, as his brother is."

"His brother? What, Vi, do you admire that strange, wild creature, with the long, straggling beard? What taste! What taste! Why, he quite frightens me. He looks like a Vampire, or something odd out of the Arabian Nights."

"Ah, Madge, you like smug people, don't you? with smoothly brushed hair and ribston pippin cheeks; let us say, like Tommy Eastwood."

"Be quiet, Vi. You know I don't care a bit about Tommy Eastwood, but I *do* prefer apple cheeks to lanthorn jaws and hollow eyes. There now. You may make the most of that, and tease me about it, as papa does. I see what it is though. You're one of those sly, quiet girls, who love a bit of romance all the same. I do believe you'd like that awful creature, Wilford Hadfield, to come down to the cottage in chain mail, armed to the teeth, brandishing a battle-axe, and carry you off on a coal-black steed. Wouldn't you like it, Vi? I'm sure you would; nothing would please you better, for all you're sitting there so demure and mum, mending your stockings, than to be Mrs. Brian de Bois Gilbert, or some awful person of that sort. I know you, Miss Vi, better than you think."

"Be quiet, Madge," Vi interposes, laughing.

"Yes, you're romantic enough. I'm practical. You like novels with lots of sentiment in them, and that sort of stuff. I like funny stories that make one die of laughing. Hallo! Vi. Stephen Hadfield's coming here. Will he come into this room, do you think? Isn't my dress awfully untidy—and isn't this collar crumpled? And my hair feels as though it had all tumbled down at the back. Has it, Vi? I wish I could look so neat and trim as you always do; but I never shall, I know. Oh, it's all right. He's gone into the surgery."

"I hope there's no one ill at the Grange." Stephen Hadfield consulted for some time with Mr. Fuller in his surgery. The doctor was informed of Wilford's plans for the future, so far as they had been unfolded. Something also was said of the symptoms of ill-health that Wilford had manifested.

"I didn't at all like his looks at the funeral," said Mr. Fuller, reflectively.

"Come up to the Grange, and see him and talk to him. He is very fond of you. I know no one who has more influence over him. Try and persuade him to abandon this project of quitting us. Doubtless he is much hurt and grieved at my father's will, which is unquestionably very cruel to him in its provisions; but it shall be my care to soften these so far as he is concerned. He shall never feel that any real difference has been made between us. He shall be master of the Grange if he will."

"That's right, Stephen," said the doctor, heartily, "I'm glad to hear you speak like that. The poor lad has been hardly dealt

with. He'll be better by and by, mind and body. We'll take care of both. We'll bring him to think differently of all these matters. I'll come up to the Grange to-night and have a talk with him."

True to his word, the doctor visited the Grange in the evening, and had a long discussion with Wilford. He was always more open in his conversation with the doctor than with any one else.

"This place sickens me—I cannot bear to look around me. On every side I see something that reminds me of the day I went away—of the night I came back. I hear his voice in every room. The story of the Prodigal is always ringing in my ears. I perpetually see him tearing up the new will or pointing to the blotted lines in the Bible. Let me only get away from here."

"Where will you go?"

"To London; I will lose myself there," he said, grimly; "the place is big enough. I will change my name—my nature too, if I can. Let me live and die uncared for—unknown. I ask no more."

The doctor contemplated him for some minutes as though weighing his words and identifying him with them.

"How like his father," muttered Mr. Fuller; "and obstinate like all the Hadfields;" and the doctor took Wilford's hand abruptly, almost mechanically it seemed, gazing into his face the while. He let go his wrist with a start.

"What a pulse! do you know that you are very feverish—very ill?"

"I fear so. No matter. I must go. I'll get help in London."

"You'll drop down and die on the road before you're gone half a mile from the place."

His words seemed to carry conviction to the mind of Wilford.

"What shall I do?" he asked sadly, his eyes wandering and his limbs falling listlessly.

"I'll tell you," Mr. Fuller answered. "You shall leave here." Wilford brightened. "You shall come to my cottage. I'll watch you till you're quite yourself again. Then you shall leave us, not before. You shall live as quietly and retired as you please; shall see no one. No one shall know of your presence there. You shall be called by what name you choose. You shall have your own way in everything. Will you come?"

He reflected for a few minutes.

"I may leave when I please?"

"If you are well, mind; not unless."

"You will not seek to change my plans?"

"I will never again allude to them, if you prefer that I should not do so."

"I'll come," said Wilford.

"To-morrow, mind; early. Let them drive you over in the covered carriage."

And the doctor sought out Stephen, and informed him of what had passed.

"We must humor him," said the doctor. "Be satisfied he shall come back here safe and well, in a few weeks; only, if we oppose him now, we drive these strange notions of his about the Grange into confirmed mania: already they grow upon him fearfully; they prey upon him in all sorts of ways. With returning health will come a happier frame of mind. He shall be a new creature soon."

"Let it be as you wish, doctor," said Stephen, and Mr. Fuller returned to his cottage. He was muttering to himself all the way home.

"Chilliness and shivering," he said; it was almost as though he were quoting from medical notes, "succeeded by heat, restlessness, thirst, and fever. Very bad; very bad. That boy—I can't help calling him so—one thing—he'll always be a boy to me—that boy, mark my words," he was forgetful apparently of the fact that there was no one present who could do anything of the kind, "that boy will be prostrate in a few days, and I shall have my work cut out for me to set him up again. It will be as much as they'll do to get him round to the cottage to-morrow—acute pains in the knees, wrists, shoulders; shifting pains, which you never know where to expect next, then absolute helplessness. A nice programme for a patient. Very bad, very bad! And then pleurisy, perhaps, or endocarditis, or pericarditis. Yes, and then another job for Mr. Tressell, of Mowle, and another tablet in Grilling Abbots church. And all that comes of improper diet and disordered blood and undue exposure to cold. Why wont people be more careful? But they wont, and so it's no use talking. Perhaps it would be worse for doctors if they were to be more careful. Blood-letting? No. I don't think we can afford blood-letting in this case. We'll try iodide of potassium, or perhaps the alkalies and alkoline carbonates with calomel and opium. I've great faith in the alkalies, myself. I remember in that important case at Mowle"—and the doctor wandered into medical reminiscences.

"Have the spare bedroom ready for to-morrow, Vi," he said, entering his cottage, "and everything well-aired. We're going to have a visitor."

"Who, papa dear?" asks Miss Madge; "do tell me!"

"I heard you this morning, Madge. You talk loud enough. Who? why *The Vampire*!"

PART V.—CHAPTER XV.

Mrs. VINCENT came to a dead stop as they passed the doors of Salem, which were ajar, taking resolution in the desperateness of her uncertainty—for the feelings in the widow's mind were not confined to one burning impulse of terror for Susan, but complicated by a wonderful amount of flying anxieties about other matters as well. *She* knew, by many teachings of experience, what would be said by all the connection, when it was known that the minister's mother had been in Carlingford without going to see anybody—not even Mrs. Tufton, the late minister's wife, or Mrs. Tozer, who was so close at hand. Though her heart was racked, Mrs. Vincent knew her duty. She stopped short in her fright and distress with the mild obduracy of which she was capable. Before rushing away out of Carlingford to protect her daughter, the mother, notwithstanding her anxiety, could not forget the injury which she might possibly do by this means to the credit of her son.

"Arthur, the chapel is open—I should like to go in and rest," she said, with a little gasp; "and oh, my dear boy, take a little pity upon me! To see the state you are in, and not to know anything, is dreadful. You must have a vestry, where one could sit down a little—let us go in."

"A vestry—yes; it will be a fit place," cried Vincent, scarcely knowing what he was saying, and indeed worn out with the violence of his own emotions. This little persistent pause of the widow, who was not absorbed by any one passionate feeling, but took all the common cares of life with her into her severest trouble, awoke the young man to himself. He, too, recollected that this enemy who had stolen into his house was not to be reached by one wild rush, and that everything could not be suffered to plunge after Susan's happiness into an indiscriminate gulf of ruin. All his own duties pricked at his heart with bitter reminders in that moment when he stood by the door of Salem, where two poor women were busy inside, with pails and brushes, preparing for Sunday. The minister, too, had to prepare for Sunday. He could not dart forth, breathing fire and flame at a moment's notice, upon the serpent who had entered his Eden. Even at this dreadful moment, in all the fever of such a discovery,

the touch of his mother's hand upon his arm brought him back to his lot. He pushed open the mean door, and led her into the scene of his weekly labors with a certain sickening disgust in his heart which would have appalled his companion. *She* was a dutiful woman, subdued by long experience of that inevitable necessity against which all resistance fails; and he a passionate young man, naturally a rebel against every such bond. They could not understand each other; but the mother's troubled face, all conscious of Tufton and Tozer, and what the connection would say, brought all the weight of his own particular burden back upon Vincent's mind. He pushed in past the pails with a certain impatience which grieved Mrs. Vincent. She followed him with a pained and disapproving look, nodding, with a faint little smile, to the women, who no doubt were members of the flock, and might spread an evil report of the pastor, who took no notice of them. As she followed him to the vestry, she could not help thinking, with a certain strange mixture of pain, vexation, and tender pride, how different his dear father would have been. "But Arthur, dear boy, has my quick temper," sighed the troubled woman. After all, it was her fault rather than her son's.

"This is a very nice room," said Mrs. Vincent, sitting down with an air of relief, "but I think it would be better to close the window, as there is no fire. You were always very susceptible to cold, Arthur, from a child. And now, my dear boy, we are undisturbed, and out of those glaring streets where everybody knows you. I have not troubled you, Arthur, for I saw you were very much troubled; but, oh! don't keep me anxious now."

"Keep you anxious! You ask me to make you anxious beyond anything you can think of," said the young man, closing the window with a hasty and fierce impatience, which she could not understand. "Good heavens, mother! why did you let that man into your innocent house?"

"Who is he, Arthur?" asked Mrs. Vincent, with a blanched face.

"He is——" Vincent stopped with his hand upon the window where he had overheard that conversation, a certain awe coming over him. Even Susan went out of his mind when he thought of the dreadful calm-

ness with which his strange acquaintance had promised to kill her companion of that night. Had she started already on this mission of vengeance? A cold thrill came over him where he stood. "I can't tell who he is," he exclaimed, abruptly, throwing himself down upon the little sofa; "but it was to be in safety from him that Mrs. Hilyard sent her daughter to Lonsdale. It was he whom she vowed to kill if he found the child. Ah!—he is," cried the young man, springing to his feet again with a sudden pang and smothered exclamation as the truth dawned upon him, "Lady Western's brother. What other worse thing he is I cannot tell. Ruin, misery, and horror at the least—death to Susan—not much less to me."

"To you? O, Arthur, have pity upon me, my heart is breaking," said Mrs. Vincent. "O, my boy, my boy, whom I would die to save from any trouble! don't tell me I have destroyed you. That cannot be, Arthur—that cannot be!"

The poor minister did not say anything—his heart was bitter within him. He paced up and down the vestry with dreadful thoughts. What was she to him if she had a hundred brothers? Nothing in the world could raise the young Nonconformist to that sweet light which she made beautiful; and far beyond that difference came the cruel recollection of those smiles and tears—pathetic, involuntary confessions. If there was another man in the world whom she could trust "with life—to death!" what did it matter though a thousand frightful combinations involved poor Vincent with her kindred? He tried to remind himself of all this, but did not succeed. In the mean time, the fact glared upon him that it was her brother who had aimed this deadly blow at the honor and peace of his own humble house; and his heart grew sad with the thought that, however indifferent she might be to him, however unattainable, here was a distinct obstacle which must cut off all that bewildering, tantalizing intercourse which at present was still possible, notwithstanding every other hindrance. He thought of this, and not of Susan, as the floor of the little vestry thrilled under his feet. He was bitter, aggrieved, indignant. His troubled mother, who sat by there, half afraid to cry, watching him with frightened,

anxious, uncomprehending eyes, had done him a sharp and personal injury. *She* could not fancy how it was, nor what she could have done. She followed him with mild tearful glances, waiting with a woman's compelled patience till he should come to himself, and revolving thoughts of Salem, and supply for the pulpit there, with an anxious pertinacity. But in her way Mrs. Vincent was a wise woman. She did not speak—she let him wear himself out first in that sudden apprehension of the misfortune personal to himself, which was at the moment so much more poignant and bitter than any other dread. When he had subsided a little—and first of all he threw up the window, leaning out, to his mother's great vexation, with a total disregard of the draught, and received the chill of the January breeze upon his heated brow—she ventured to say, gently, "Arthur, what are we to do?"

"To go to Lonsdale," said Vincent. "When we came in here, I thought we could rush off directly; but these women outside there, and this place, remind me that I am not a free man, who can go at once and do his duty. I am in fetters to Salem, mother. Heaven knows when I may be able to get away. Sunday must be provided for first. No natural immediate action is possible to me."

"Hush, Arthur, dear—oh, hush! Your duty to your flock is above your duty even to your sister," said the widow, with a tremulous voice, timid of saying anything to him whose mood she could not comprehend. "You must find out when the first train starts, and I will go. I have been very foolish," faltered the poor mother, "as you say, Arthur; but if my poor child is to bear such a dreadful blow, I am the only one to take care of her. Susan"—here she made a pause, her lip trembled, and she had all but broken into tears—"will not upbraid me, dear. You must not neglect your duty, whatever happens; and now let us go and inquire about the train, Arthur, and you can come on Monday, after your work is over; and, O my dear boy, we must not repine, but accept the arrangements of Providence. It was what your dear father always said to his dying day."

Her face all trembling and pale, her eyes full of tears which were not shed, her tender humility, which never attempted a

defence, and those motherly, tremulous, wistful advices which it now for the first time dawned upon Mrs. Vincent her son was not certain to take, moved the young Nonconformist out of his personal vexation and misery.

"This will not do," he said. "I must go with you; and we must go directly. Susan may be less patient, less believing, less ready to take our word for it, than you imagine, mother. Come; if there is anybody to be got to do this preaching, the thing will be easy. Tozer will help me perhaps. We will waste no more time here."

"I am quite rested, Arthur dear," said Mrs. Vincent; "and it will be right for me to call at Mrs. Tozer's too. I wish I could have gone to Mrs. Tufton's, and perhaps some others of your people. But you must tell them, dear, that I was very hurried—and—and not very well; and that it was family business that brought me here."

"I do not see they have any business with the matter," said the rebellious minister.

"My dear, it will of course be known that I was in Carlingford; and I know how things are spoken of in a flock," said Mrs. Vincent, rising; "but you must tell them all I wanted to come, and could not—which, indeed, will be quite true. A minister's family ought to be very careful, Arthur," added the much-experienced woman. "I know how little a thing makes mischief in a congregation. Perhaps, on the whole, I ought not to call at Mrs. Tozer's, as there is no time to go elsewhere. But still I should like to do it. One good friend is often everything to a young pastor. And, my dear, you should just say a word in passing to the women outside."

"By way of improving the occasion?" said Vincent, with a little scorn. "Mother, don't torture yourself about me. I shall get on very well; and we have plenty on our hands just now without thinking of Salem. Come, come; with this horrible cloud overhanging Susan, how can you spare a thought for such trifles as these?"

"O, Arthur, my dear boy, must not we keep you right?" said his mother; "are not you our only hope? If this dreadful news you tell me is true, my child will break her heart, and I will be the cause of it; and

Susan has no protector or guardian, Arthur dear, that can take care of her, but you."

Wiping her eyes, and walking with a feeble step, Mrs. Vincent followed her son out of Salem; but she looked up with gentle interest to his pulpit as she passed, and said it was a cold day to the cleaners, with anxious carefulness. She was not carried away from her palpable standing-ground by any wild tempest of anxiety. Susan, whose heart would be broken by this blow, was her mother's special object in life; but the thought of that coming sorrow which was to crush the girl's heart, made Mrs. Vincent only the more anxiously concerned to conciliate and please everybody whose influence could be of any importance to her son.

So they came out into the street together, and went on to Tozer's shop. She, tremulous, watchful, noting everything; now lost in thought as to how the dreadful truth was to be broken to Susan; now in anxious plans for impressing upon Arthur the necessity of considering his people—he, stinging with personal wounds and bitterness, much more deeply alarmed than his mother, and burning with consciousness of all the complications which she was totally ignorant of. Fury against the villain himself, bitter vexation that he was Lady Western's brother, anger at his mother for admitting, at Susan for giving him her heart, at Mrs. Hilyard for he could not tell what, because she had added a climax to all, burned in Vincent's mind as he went on to George Street with his mother leaning on his arm, who asked him after every wayfarer who passed them, Who was that? It was not wonderful that the young man gradually grew into a fever of excitement and restless misery. Everything conspired to exasperate him—even the fact that Sunday came so near, and could not be escaped. The whirl of his brain came to a climax when Lady Western's carriage drove past, and through the mist of his wretchedness he saw the smile and the beautiful hand waved to him in sweet recognition. O Heaven! to bring tears to those eyes, or a pang to that heart!—to have her turn from him shuddering, or pass him with cold looks, because her brother was a villain, and *he* the avenger of that crime! His mother, almost running to keep up with his unconsciously quickened pace, cast pitiful looks at him, inquiring what it was. The

poor young fellow could not have told even if he would. It was a combination of miseries, sharply stimulated to the intolerable point by the mission on which he had now to enter Tozer's shop.

"We heard you was come, ma'am," said Tozer, graciously, "and in course was looking for a call. I hope you are going to stay awhile and help us take care of the pastor. He don't take that care of himself as his friends would wish," said the butterman. "Mr. Vincent, sir, I've a deal to say to you when you're at leisure. Old Mr. Tufton, he has a deal to say to you. We are as anxious as ever we can be, us as are old stagers, to keep the minister straight, ma'am. He's but a young man, and he's come into a deal of popularity, and any one more thought on, in our connection, I don't know as I would wish to see; but it wouldn't do to let him have his head turned. Them lectures on Church and State couldn't but be remarked, being delivered, as you may say, in the world, all on us making a sacrifice to do our duty by our fellow-creatures, seein' what we had in our power. But man is but mortal; and us Salem folks don't like to see no signs of *that* weakness in a pastor; it's our duty to see as his head's not turned."

"Indeed, I trust there is very little fear of that," said Mrs. Vincent, roused, and set on the defensive. "My dear boy has been used to be appreciated, and to have people round him who could understand him. As for having his head turned, that might happen to a man who did not know what intelligent approbation was; but after doing so well as he did at college, and having his dear father's approval, I must say I don't see any cause to apprehend *that*, Mr. Tozer. I am not surprised at all, for my part—I always knew what my Arthur could do."

"No more of this," said Vincent, impatiently. "Look here, I have come on a special business. Can any one be got, do you think, to preach on Sunday? I must go home with my mother to-day."

"To-day!" Tozer opened his eyes, with a blank stare, as he slowly took off his apron. "You was intimated to begin that course on the Miracles, Mr. Vincent, if you'll excuse *me*, on Sunday. Salem folks is a little sharp, I don't deny. It would be a great disappointment, and I can't say I

think as it would be took well if you was to go away."

"I can't help that," said the unfortunate minister, to whom opposition at this moment was doubly intolerable. "The Salem people, I presume, will hear reason. My mother has come upon——"

"Family business," interrupted Mrs. Vincent, with the deepest trembling anxiety. "Arthur, dear, let me explain it, for you are too susceptible. My son is all the comfort we have in the world, Mr. Tozer," said the anxious widow. "I ought not to have told him how much his sister wanted him, but I was rash and did so; and now I ought to bear the penalty. I have made him anxious about Susan; but, Arthur dear, never mind; you must let me go by myself, and on Monday you can come. Your dear father always said his flock was his first duty, and if Sunday is a special day, as Mr. Tozer says——"

"O pa, is it Mrs. Vincent? and you keep her in the shop, when we are all as anxious as ever we can be to see her," said Phæbe, who suddenly came upon the scene. "Oh, please to come up-stairs to the drawing-room. Oh, I *am* so glad to see you! and it was so unkind of Mr. Vincent not to let us know you were coming. Mamma wanted to ask you to come here, for she thought it would be more comfortable than a bachelor's rooms; and we did think the minister would have told *us*," said Phæbe, with reproachful looks; "but now that you have come back again, after such a long time, please, Mr. Vincent, let your mother come up-stairs. They say you don't think us good enough to be trusted now; but, oh, I don't think you could ever be like that!" continued Phæbe, pausing by the door as she ushered Mrs. Vincent into the drawing-room, and giving the minister an appealing remonstrative glance before she dropped her eyelids in virginal humility. Poor Vincent paused too, disgusted and angry, but with a certain confusion. To fling out of the house, dash off to his rooms, make his hasty preparations for the journey, was the impulse which possessed him; but his mother was looking back with wistful curiosity, wondering what the two could mean by pausing behind her at the door.

"I am exactly as I was the last time I saw you, which was on Tuesday," he said,

with some indignation. "I will follow you, please. My mother has no time to spare, as she leaves to-day—can Mrs. Tozer see her? She has been agitated and worn out, and we have not really a moment to spare."

"Apparently not—not for your own friends, Mr. Vincent," said Mrs. Tozer, who now presented herself. "I hope to see you well, ma'am, and proud to see you in my house, though I will say the minister don't show himself not so kind as was to be wished. Phæbe, don't put on none o' your pleading looks—for shame of yourself, miss! If Mr. Vincent has them in Carlingford as he likes better than any in his own flock, it aint no concern of ours. It's a thing well known as the Salem folks are all in trade, and don't drive their carriages, nor give themselves up to this world and vanity. I never saw no good come, for my part, of folks sacrificing themselves and their good money as Tozer and the rest set their hearts on, with that Music Hall and them advertising and things—not as I was meaning to upbraid you, Mr. Vincent, particular not before your mother, as is a stranger—but we was a deal comfortabler before them lectures and things, and taking off your attention from your own flock."

Before this speech was finished, the whole party had assembled in the drawing-room, where a newly lighted fire, hastily set light to on the spur of the moment by Phæbe, was sputtering drearily. Mrs. Vincent had been placed in an arm-chair at one side, and Mrs. Tozer, spreading out her black silk apron and arranging her cap, set herself doggedly on the other, with a little toss of her head and careful averting of her eyes from the accused pastor. Tozer, without his apron, had drawn a chair to the table, and was drumming on it with the blunt round ends of his fingers; while Phæbe, in a slightly pathetic attitude, ready for general conciliation, hovered near the minister, who grew red all over, and clenched his hand with an emphasis most intelligible to his frightened mother. The dreadful pause was broken by Phæbe, who rushed to the rescue.

"O ma, how can you!" cried that young lady—"you were all worrying and teasing Mr. Vincent, you know you were; and if he does know that beautiful lady," said Phæbe, with her head pathetically on one side, and another glance at him, still

more appealing and tenderly reproachful—"and—and likes to go to see her—it's—it's the naturalest thing that ever was. Oh, I knew he never could think anything of anybody else in Carlingford after Lady Western! and I am sure, whatever other people may say, I—I—never can think Mr. Vincent was to blame."

Phæbe's words were interrupted by her feelings—she sank back into a seat when she had concluded, and put a handkerchief to her eyes. As for Tozer, he still drummed on the table. A certain human sympathy was in the mind of the buttermilk, but he deferred to the readier utterance of his indignant wife.

"I never said it was any concern of ours," said Mrs. Tozer. "It aint our way to court nobody as doesn't seek our company; but a minister as we've all done a deal to make comfortable, and took an interest in equal to a son, and has been made such a fuss about as I never see in our connection—it's disappointing, I will say, to see him a-going off after worldly folks that don't care no more about religion than I do about playing the piano. Not as Phæbe doesn't play the piano better than most—but such things aint in my thoughts. I do say it's disappointing, and gives folks a turn. If she's pretty lookin'—as she may be, for what I can tell—it aint none of the pastor's business. Them designing ladies is the ruin of a young man; and when he deserts his flock, as are making sacrifices, and goes off after strangers, I don't say if it's right or wrong, but I say it's disappointin', and what wasn't looked for at Mr. Vincent's hand."

Vincent had listened up to this point with moderate self-restraint—partially, perhaps, subdued by the alarmed expression of his mother's face, who had fixed her anxious eyes upon him, and vainly tried to convey telegraphic warnings; but the name of Lady Western stung him. "What is all this about?" he asked, with assumed coldness. "Nobody supposes, surely, that I am to render an account of my private friends to the managers of the chapel. It is a mistake if it has entered any imagination. I shall do nothing of the kind. There is enough of this. When I neglect my duties, I presume I shall hear of it more seriously. In the mean time, I have real business in hand."

"But, Arthur dear, I dare say some one

has misunderstood you," said his mother; "it always turns out so. I came the day before yesterday, Mrs. Tozer. I left home very suddenly in great anxiety, and I was very much fatigued by the journey, and I must go back to-day. I have been very selfish, taking my son away from his usual occupations. Never mind me, Arthur dear; if you have any business, leave me to rest a little with Mrs. Tozer. I can take such a liberty here, because I know she is such a friend of yours. Don't keep Mr. Tozer away from his business on my account. I know what it is when time is valuable. I will just stay a little with Mrs. Tozer, and you can let me know when it is time for the train. Yes, I came up very hurriedly," said the gentle diplomatist, veiling her anxiety as she watched the gloomy countenances round her. "We had heard some bad news; I had to ask my son to go to town yesterday for me, and—and I must go home to-day without much comfort. I feel a good deal shaken, but I dare not stay away any longer from my dear child at home."

"Dear, dear; I hope it's nothing serious as has happened?" said Mrs. Tozer, slightly mollified.

"It is some bad news about the gentleman Susan was going to marry," said Mrs. Vincent, with a rapid calculation of the necessities of the position; "and she does not know yet. Arthur, my dear boy, it would be a comfort to my mind to know about the train."

"Oh, and you will be so fatigued!" said Phæbe. "I do so hope it's nothing bad. I am so interested about Miss Vincent. O pa, do go down-stairs and look at the railway bill. Wont you lie down on the sofa a little and rest? Fancy, mamma, taking two journeys in three days!—it would kill you; and, oh, I do so hope it is nothing very bad. I have so longed to see you and Mr. Vincent's sister. He told me all about her one evening. Is the gentleman ill? But do lie down and rest after all your fatigue. Mamma, don't you think it would do Mrs. Vincent good?"

"We'll have a bit of dinner presently," said Mrs. Tozer. "Phæbe, go and fetch the wine. There is one thing in trouble, that it makes folks find out their real friends. It wouldn't be to Lady Western the minister would think of taking his mother. I aint

saying anything, Tozer—nor Mr. Vincent needn't think I am saying anything. If I speak my mind a bit I don't bear malice. Phæbe's a deal too feelin', Mrs. Vincent—she's overcome, that's what she is—and if I must speak the truth, it's disappointing to see our pastor as we've all made sacrifices for, following after the ungodly. I am a mother myself," continued Mrs. Tozer, changing her seat, as her husband, followed by the indignant Vincent, went down-stairs, "and I know a mother's feelings; but after what I heard from Mrs. Pigeon, and how it's going through all the connection in Carlingford—"

Mrs. Vincent roused herself to listen. Her son's cause was safe in her hands.

Meantime, Vincent went angry and impetuous down-stairs. "I will not submit to any inquisition," cried the young man. "I have done nothing I am ashamed of. If I dine with a friend, I will suffer no questioning on the subject. What do you mean? What right has any man in any connection to interfere with my actions? Why, you would not venture to attack your servant so! Am I the servant of this congregation? Am I their slave? Must I account to them for every accident of my life? Nobody in the world has a right to make such a demand upon me."

"If a minister aint a servant, we pays him his salary at the least, and expects him to please us," said Tozer, sulkily. "If it weren't for that, I don't give a sixpence for the Dissenting connection. Them as likes to please themselves would be far better in a State Church, where it wouldn't disappoint nobody; not meaning to be hard on you as has given great satisfaction, them's my views; but if the Chapel folks is a little particular, it's no more nor a pastor's duty to bear with them, and return a soft answer. I don't say as I'm dead again' you, like the women," added the buttermilk, softening, "they're jealous, that's what they are; but I couldn't find it in my heart, not for my own part, to be hard on a man as was led away after a beautiful creature like that. But there can't no good come of it, Mr. Vincent; take my advice, sir, as have seen a deal of the world—there can't no good come of it. A man as goes dining with Lady Western, and thinking as she means to make a friend of him, aint the

man for Salem. We're different sort of folks, and we can't go on together. Old Mr. Tufton will tell you just the same, as has gone through it all—and that's why I said both him and me had a deal to say to you, as are a young man and should take good advice."

It was well for Vincent that the worthy butterman was lengthy in his address. The sharp impression of resentment and indignation which possessed him calmed down under this outpouring of words. He bethought himself of his dignity, his character. A squabble of self-defence, in which the sweet name of the lady of his dreams must be involved—an angry encounter of words about her, down here in this mean world to which the very thought of her was alien, wound up her young worshipper into supernatural self-restraint. He edged past the table in the back-parlor to the window, and stood there looking out with a suppressed fever in his veins, biting his lip, and bearing his lecture. On the whole, the best way, perhaps, would have been to leave Carlingford at once, as another man would have done, and leave the Sunday to take care of itself. But though he groaned under his bonds, the young Non-conformist was instinctively confined by them, and had the habits of a man trained in necessary subjection to circumstances. He turned round abruptly when the butterman at last came to a pause.

"I will write to one of my friends in Hometown," he said, "if you will make an apology for me in the chapel. I dare say I could get Beecher to come down, who is a very clever fellow; and as for the beginning of that course of sermons—"

He stopped short with a certain suppressed disgust. Good heavens! what mockery it seemed. Amid these agonies of life, a man overwhelmed with deadly fear, hatred, and grief might indeed pause to snatch a burning lesson, or appropriate with trembling hands a consolatory promise; but with the whole solemn future of his sister's life hanging on a touch, with all the happiness and peace of his own involved in a feverish uncertainty, with dark, unsuspected depths of injury and wretchedness opening at his feet—to think of courses of sermons and elaborate preachments, ineffectual words, and pretences of teaching! For the first time in the commotion of his soul, in the resentments and fore-

bodings to which he gave no utterance, in the bitter conviction of uncertainty in everything which consumed his heart, a doubt of his own ability to teach came to Vincent's mind. He stopped short with an intolerable pang of impatience and self-disgust.

"And what of that, Mr. Vincent?" said Tozer. "I can't say as I think it'll be well took to see a stranger in the pulpit after them intimations. I made it my business to send the notices out last night; and after saying everywhere as you were to begin a coorse, as I always advised, if you had took my advice, it aint a way to stop talk to put them off now. Old Mr. Tufton, you know, he was a different man; it was experience as was his line; and I don't mean to say nothing against experience," said the worthy deacon. "There aint much true godliness, take my word, where there's a shrinking from disclosing the state of your soul; but for keeping up a congregation there's nothing I know on like a coorse—and a clever young man as has studied his subjects, and knows the manners of them old times, and can give a bit of a description as takes the interest, that's what I'd set my heart on for Salem. There's but three whole pews in the chapel as isn't engaged," said the butterman, with a softening glance at the pastor; "and the Misses Hemmings sent over this morning to say as they meant to come regular the time you was on the Miracles; and but for this cackle of the women, as you'll soon get over, there aint a thing as I can see to stop us filling up to the most influential chapel in the connection; I mean in our parts."

The subdued swell of expectation with which the ambitious butterman concluded, somehow made Vincent more tolerant even in his undiminished excitement. He gave a subdued groan over all this that was expected of him, but not without a little answering thrill in his own troubled and impatient heart.

"A week can't make much difference, if I am ever to do any good," said the young man. "I must go now; but if you explain the matter for me, you will smooth the way. I will bring my mother and sister here," he went on, giving himself over for a moment to a little gleam of comfort, "and everything will go on better. I am worried and anxious now, and don't know what I am about. Give me some paper and I will write to Beecher.

You will like him. He is a good fellow, and preaches much better than I do," added poor Vincent, with a sigh, sitting wearily down by the big table. He was subdued by his condition at that moment, and Tozer appreciated the momentary humbleness.

"I am not the man to desert my minister when he's in trouble," said the brave but-terman. "Look you here, Mr. Vincent; don't fret yourself about it. I'll take it in hand; and I'd like to see the man in Salem as would say to the contrary again' me and the pastor both. Make your mind easy; I'll manage 'em. As for the women," said Tozer, scratching his head, "I don't pretend not to be equal to that; but my missis is as reasonable as most, and Phoebe, she'll stand up for you, whatever you do. If you'll take my advice, and be a bit prudent, and don't go after no more vanities, things aint so far wrong but a week or two will make them right."

With this consolatory assurance Vincent began to write his letter. Before he had concluded it, the maid came to lay the cloth for dinner, thrusting him into a corner, where he accomplished his writing painfully on his knee with his ink on the window-sill, a position in which Phoebe found him when she ventured down-stairs. It was she who took his letter from him, and ran with it to the shop to despatch it at once; and Phoebe came back to tell him that Mrs. Vincent was resting, and that it was *so* pleasant to see him back again after such a time. "I never expected you would have any patience for us when I saw you knew Lady Western *so* well. Oh, she is so sweetly pretty! and if I were a gentleman, I know I should fall *deep* in love with her," said Phoebe, with a sidelong glance, and not without hopes of calling forth a disclaimer from the minister; but the poor minister, jammed up in the corner, whence it was now necessary to extricate his chair preparatory to sitting down to a family dinner with the Tozers, was as usual unequal to the occasion, and had nothing to say. Phoebe's chair was by the minister's side during that substantial meal; and the large fire which burned behind Mrs. Tozer at the head of the table, and the steaming viands on the hospitable board, and the prevailing atmosphere of cheese and bacon which entered when the door was opened, made even Mrs. Vincent pale and flush a little in the

heroic patience and friendliness with which she bent all her powers to secure the support of these adherents to her son. "I could have wished, Arthur, they were a little more refined," she said, faintly, when the dinner was over, and they were at last on their way to the train; "but I am sure they are very *genuine*, my dear; and one good friend is often everything to a pastor; and I am so glad we went at such a time." So glad! The young Nonconformist heaved a tempestuous sigh, and turned away not without a reflection upon the superficial emotions of women who at such a time could be glad. But Mrs. Vincent, for her part, with a fatigue and sickness of heart which she concealed from herself as much as she could, let down her veil, and cried quietly behind it. Perhaps her share of the day's exhaustion had not been the mildest or least hard.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE journey was troublesome and tedious, involving a change from one railway to another, and a troubled glimpse into the most noisy streets of London by the way. Vincent had left his mother, as he thought, safe in the cab which carried them to the second railway station, and was disposing of the little luggage they had with them, that he might not require to leave her again, when he heard an anxious voice calling him, and found her close behind him, afloat in the bustle and confusion of the crowd, dreadfully agitated and helpless, calling upon her Arthur with impatient accents of distress. His annoyance to find her there increased her confusion and trembling. "Arthur," she gasped out, "I saw him—I saw him—not a minute ago—in a cab—with some ladies; O my dear, run after him. That was the way he went. Arthur, Arthur, why don't you go? Never mind me—I can take care of myself."

"Who was it—how did he go?—why didn't you stop him, mother?" cried the young man, rushing back to the spot she had left. Nothing was to be seen there but the usual attendant group of railway porters, and the alarmed cabman who had been keeping his eye on Mrs. Vincent. The poor widow gasped as she gazed and saw no traces of the enemy who had eluded them.

"O Arthur, my dear boy, I thought, in such a case, it ought to be a man to speak to

him," faltered Mrs. Vincent. "He went that way—that way, look!—in a cab, with somebody in a blue veil."

Vincent rushed away in the direction she indicated, at a pace which he was totally unused to, and of course quite unable to keep up beyond the first heat; but few things could be more hopeless than to dash into the whirl of vehicles in the crowded current of the New Road, with any vain hope of identifying one which had ten minutes' start, and no more distinctive mark of identity than the spectrum of a blue veil. He rushed back again, angry with himself for losing breath in so vain an attempt, just in time to place his mother in a carriage and jump in beside her before the train started. Mrs. Vincent's anxiety, her questions which he could not hear, her doubts whether it might not have been best to have missed the train and followed Mr. Fordham, aggravated the much-tried patience of her son beyond endurance. They set off upon their sad journey with a degree of injured feeling on both sides, such as often gives a miserable complication to a mutual anxiety. But the mother, wounded and timid, feeling more than ever the difference between the boy who was all her own and the man who had thoughts and impulses of which she knew nothing, was naturally the first to recover and to make wistful overtures of peace.

"Well, Arthur," she said, after awhile, leaning forward to him, her mild voice making a gentle murmur through the din of the journey, "though it was very foolish of me not to speak to him when I saw him, still, dear, he is gone and out of the way; that is a great comfort—we will never, never let him come near Susan again. That is just what I was afraid of; I have been saying to myself all day, 'What if he should go to Lonsdale too, and deny it all?' but Providence, you see, dear, has ordered it for us, and now he shall never come near my poor child again."

"Do you think he has been to Lonsdale?" asked Vincent.

"My poor Susan!" said his simple mother, "she will be happier than ever when we come to her with this dreadful news. Yes; I suppose he must have been seeing her, Arthur—and I am glad it has happened while I was away, and before we knew; and now he is gone," said the widow,

looking out of the carriage with a sigh of relief, as if she could still see the road by which he had disappeared—"now he is gone, there will be no need for any dreadful strife or arguments. God always arranges things for us so much better than we can arrange them for ourselves. Fancy if he had come to-morrow to tear her dear heart to pieces!—O Arthur, I am very thankful! There will be nothing to do now but to think best how to break it to her. He had ladies with him; it is dreadful to think of such villany. O Arthur, do you imagine it could be his wife?—and somebody in a blue veil."

"A blue veil!"—Mrs. Hilyard's message suddenly occurred to Vincent's mind, with its special mention of that article of disguise. "If this man is the man we suppose, he has accomplished one of his wishes," said the minister, slowly; "and she will kill him as sure as he lives."

"Who will kill him?—I hope nothing has occurred about your friend's child to agitate my Susan," said his mother. "It was all the kindness of your heart, my dear boy; but it was very imprudent of you to let Susan's name be connected with anybody of doubtful character. O Arthur, dear, we have both been very imprudent!—you have so much of my quick temper. It was a punishment to me to see how impatient you were to-day; but Susan takes after your dear father. O my own poor boy, pray! pray for her, that her heart may not be broken by this dreadful news."

And Mrs. Vincent leant back in her corner, and once more put down her veil. Pray!—who was he to pray for? Susan, forlorn and innocent, disappointed in her first love, but unharmed by any worldly soil or evil passion?—or the other sufferers involved in more deadly sort, himself palpitating with feverish impulses, broken loose from all his peaceful youthful moorings, burning with discontents and aspirations, not spiritual, but of the world? Vincent prayed none as he asked himself that bitter question. He drew back in his seat opposite his mother, and pondered in his heart the wonderful difference between the objects of compassion to whom the world gives ready tears, and those of whom the world knows and suspects nothing. Susan! he could see her mother weeping over her in her white and tender innocence. What if, perhaps,

she broke her child's heart? the shock would only send the girl with more clinging devotion to the feet of the great Father; but as for himself, all astray from duty and sober life, devoured with a consuming fancy, loathing the way and the work to which he had been trained to believe that Father had called him—who thought of weeping?—or for Her, whom his alarmed imagination could not but follow, going forth remorseless and silent to fulfil her promise, and kill the man who had wronged her? Oh, the cheat of tears!—falling sweet over the young sufferers whom sorrow blessed—drying up from the horrible complex pathways where other souls in undisclosed anguish, went farther and farther from God!

With such thoughts the mother and son hurried on upon their darkling journey. It was the middle of the night when they arrived in Lonsdale—a night starless, but piercing with cold. They were the only passengers who got out at the little station, where two or three lamps glared wildly on the night, and two pale porters made a faint bustle to forward the long convoy of carriages upon its way. One of these men looked anxiously at the widow, as if with the sudden impulse of asking a question, or communicating some news, but was called off by his superior before he could speak. Vincent unconsciously observed the look, and was surprised and even alarmed by it, without knowing why. It returned to his mind, as he gave his mother his arm to walk the remaining distance home. Why did the man put on that face of curiosity and wonder? But, to be sure, to see the mild widow arrive in this unexpected way in the middle of the icy January night, must have been surprising enough to any one who knew her, and her gentle decorous life. He tried to think no more of it, as they set out upon the windy road, where a few sparsely scattered lamps blinked wildly, and made the surrounding darkness all the darker. The station was half a mile from the town, and Mrs. Vincent's cottage was on the other side of Lonsdale, across the river, which stole sighing and gleaming through the heart of the little place. Somehow the sudden black shine of that water as they caught it, crossing the bridge, brought a shiver and flash of wild imagination to the mind of the Nonconformist. He thought of suicides, mur-

ders, ghastly concealment, and misery; and again the face of the porter returned upon him. What if something had happened while the watchful mother had been out of the way? The wind came sighing round the corners with an ineffectual gasp, as if it too had some warning, some message to deliver. Instinctively he drew his mother's arm closer, and hurried her on. Suggestions of horrible unthought-of evil seemed lurking everywhere in the noiseless blackness of the night.

Mrs. Vincent shivered too, but it was with cold and natural agitation. In her heart she was putting tender words together, framing tender phrases—consulting with herself how she was to look, and how to speak. Already she could see the half-awakened girl, starting up all glowing and sweet from her safe rest, unforeboding of evil; and the widow composed her face under the shadow of her veil, and sent back with an effort the unshed tears from her eyes, that Susan might not see any traces in her face, till she had "prepared her" a little for that dreadful, inevitable blow.

The cottage was all dark, as was natural—doubly dark to-night, for there was no light in the skies, and the wind had extinguished the lamp which stood nearest, and on ordinary occasions threw a doubtful flicker on the little house. "Susan will soon hear us, she is such a light sleeper," said Mrs. Vincent. "Ring the bell, Arthur. I don't like using the knocker, to disturb the neighbors. Everybody would think it so surprising to hear a noise in the middle of the night from our house. There—wait a moment. That was a very loud ring; Susan must be sleeping very soundly if that does not wake her up."

There was a little pause; not a sound, except the tinkling of the bell, which they could hear inside as the peal gradually subsided, was in the air; breathless silence, darkness, cold, an inhuman preternatural chill and watchfulness, no welcome sound of awakening sleepers, only their own dark shadows in the darkness, listening like all the hushed surrounding world at that closed door.

"Poor dear! O Arthur, it is dreadful to come and break her sleep," sighed Mrs. Vincent, whose strain of suspense and expectation heightened the effect of the cold:

"when will she sleep as sound again? Give another ring, dear. How terribly dark and quiet it is! Ring again, again, Arthur!—dear, dear me, to think of Susan in such a sound sleep! and generally she starts at any noise. It is to give her strength to bear what is coming, poor child, poor child!"

The bell seemed to echo out into the silent road, it pealed so clearly and loudly through the shut-up house, but not another sound disturbed the air without or within. Mrs. Vincent began to grow restless and alarmed. She went out into the road, and gazed up at the closed windows; her very teeth chattered with anxiety and cold.

"It is very odd she does not wake," said the widow; "she must be rousing now, surely. Arthur, don't look as if we had bad news. Try to command your countenance, dear. Hush, don't you hear them stirring? Now, Arthur, Arthur, oh, remember not to look so dreadful as you did in Carlingford! I am sure I hear her coming down-stairs. Hark, what is it? Ring again, Arthur—again!"

The words broke confused and half-articulate from her lips; a vague dread took possession of her, as of her son. For his part he rang the bell wildly without pausing, and applied the knocker to the echoing door with a sound which seemed to reverberate back and back through the darkness. It was not the sleep of youth Vincent thought of, as, without a word to say, he thundered his summons on the cottage door. He was not himself aware what he was afraid of; but in his eyes he saw the porter's alarmed and curious look, and felt the ominous silence thrilling with loud clangor of his own vain appeals through the deserted house.

At length a sound—the mother and son both rushed speechless towards the side-window, from which it came. The window creaked slowly open, and a head, which was not Susan's, looked cautiously out. "Who is there?" cried a strange voice; "it's some mistake. This is Mrs. Vincent's, this is, and nobody's at home. If you don't go away I'll spring the rattle, and call thieves, thieves—Fire! What do you mean coming rousing folks like this in the dead of night?"

"O Williams, are you there? Thank God! then all is well," said Mrs. Vincent, clasping her hands. "It is me—you need

not be afraid—me and my son: don't disturb Miss Susan, since she has not heard us—but come down, and let us in; don't disturb my daughter. It is me—don't you know my voice?"

"Good Lord!" cried the speaker at the window; then in a different tone, "I'm coming, ma'am—I'm coming." Instinctively, without knowing why, Vincent drew his mother's arm within his own, and held her fast. Instinctively the widow clung to him, and kept herself erect by his arm. They did not say a word—no advices now about composing his countenance. Mrs. Vincent's face was ghastly, had there been any light to see it. She went sheer forward when the door was open, as though neither her eyes, nor person were susceptible of any other motion. An inexpressible air of desolation upon the cottage parlor, where everything looked far too trim and orderly for recent domestic occupation, brought to a climax all the fanciful suggestions which had been tormenting Vincent. He called out his sister's name in an involuntary outburst of dread and excitement, "Susan! Susan!" The words pealed into the midnight echoes—but there was no Susan to answer to the call.

"It is God that keeps her asleep to keep her happy," said his mother, with her white lips. She dropped from his arm upon the sofa in a dreadful pause of determination, facing them with wide-open eyes—daring them to deceive her—resolute not to hear the terrible truth, which already in her heart she knew. "Susan is asleep, asleep!" she cried, in a terrible idiocy of despair, always facing the frightened woman before her with those eyes which knew better, but would not be undeceived. The shivering midnight, the mother's dreadful looks, the sudden waking to all this fright and wonder, were too much for the terrified guardian of the house. She fell on her knees at the widow's feet.

"O Lord! Miss Susan's gone! I'd have kep' her if I had been here. I'd have said her mamma would never send no gentleman but Mr. Arthur to fetch her away. But she's gone. Good Lord! it's killed my missis—I knew it would kill my missis. O good Lord! good Lord! Run for a doctor, Mr. Arthur; if the missis is gone, what shall we do?"

Vincent threw the frightened creature off with a savage carelessness of which he was quite unconscious, and raised his mother in his arms. She had fallen back in a dreary momentary fit which was not fainting—her eyes fluttering under their half-closed lids, her lips moving with sounds that did not come. The shock had struck her as such shocks strike the mortal frame when it grows old. When sound burst at last from the moving lips, it was in a babble that mocked all her efforts to speak. But she was not unconscious of the sudden misery. Her eyes wandered about, taking in everything around her, and at last fixed upon a letter lying half-open on Susan's work-table, almost the only token of disorder or agitation in the trim little room. The first sign of revival she showed was pointing at it with a doubtful but impatient gesture. Before she could make them understand what she meant, that "quick temper" of which Mrs. Vincent accused herself blazed up in the widow's eyes. She raised herself erect out of her son's arms, and seized the paper. It was Vincent's letter to his sister, written from London after he had failed in his inquiries about Mr. Fordham. In the light of this dreadful midnight the young man himself perceived how alarming and peremptory were its brief injunctions. "Don't write to Mr. Fordham again till my mother's return; probably I shall bring her home; we have something to say to you on this subject, and in the mean time be sure you do as I tell you." Mrs. Vincent gradually recovered herself as she read this; she said it over under her breath, getting back the use of her speech. There was not much explanation in it, yet it seemed to take the place, in the mother's confused faculties, of an apology for Susan. "She was frightened," said Mrs. Vincent, slowly, with strange twitches about her lips—"she was frightened." That was all her mind could take in at once. Afterwards, minute by minute, she raised herself up, and came to self-command and composure. Only as she recovered did the truth reveal itself clearly even to Vincent, who, after the first shock, had been occupied entirely by his mother. The young man's head throbbed and tingled as if with blows. As she sat up and gazed at him with her own recovered looks, through the dim ice-cold atmosphere, lighted

faintly with one candle, they both woke up to the reality of their position. The shock of the discovery was over—Susan was gone; but where, and with whom? There was still something to hope, if everything to fear.

"She is gone to her Aunt Alice," said Mrs. Vincent, once more looking full in the eyes of the woman who had been left in charge of the house, and who stood shivering with cold and agitation, winding and unwinding round her a thin shawl in which she had wrapped up her arms. "She is gone to her Aunt Alice—she was frightened, and thought something had happened. Tomorrow we can go and bring her home."

"O good Lord! No; she aint there," cried the frightened witness, half inaudible with her chattering teeth.

"Or to Mrs. Hastings at the farm. Susan knows what friends I can trust her to. Arthur, dear, let us go to bed. It's uncomfortable, but you wont mind for one night," said the widow, with a gasp, rising up and sitting down again. She dared not trust herself to hear any explanation, yet all the time fixed with devouring eyes upon the face of the woman whom she would not suffer to speak.

"Mother, for Heaven's sake let us understand it; let her speak—let us know. Where has Susan gone? Speak out; never mind interruptions. Where is my sister?" cried Vincent, grasping the terrified woman by the arm.

"O Lord! If the missis wouldn't look at me like that! I aint to blame!" cried Williams, piteously. "It was the day afore yesterday as the ladies came. I come up to help Mary with the beds. There was the old lady as had on a brown bonnet, and the young miss in the blue veil——"

Vincent uttered a sudden exclamation, and looked at his mother; but she would not meet his eyes—would not acknowledge any recognition of that fatal piece of gauze. She gave a little gasp, sitting bolt upright, holding fast by the back of a chair, but kept her eyes steadily and sternly upon the woman's face.

"We tidied the best room for the lady, and Miss Susan's little closet; and Mary had out the best sheets, for she says——"

"Mary—where's Mary?" cried Mrs. Vincent, suddenly.

"I know no more nor a babe," cried Williams, wringing her hands. "She's along with Miss Susan—wherever that may be—and the one in the blue veil."

"Go on, go on!" cried Vincent.

But his mother did not echo his cry. Her strained hand fell upon her lap with a certain relaxation and relief; her gaze grew less rigid; incomprehensible moisture came to her eyes. "O Arthur, there's comfort in it!" said Mrs. Vincent, looking like herself again. "She's taken Mary, God bless her! she's known what she was doing. Now I'm more easy; Williams, you can sit down and tell us the rest."

"Go on!" cried Vincent, fiercely. "Good heavens! what good can a blundering country girl do here?—go on."

The women thought otherwise; they exchanged looks of sympathy and thankfulness; they excited the impatient young man beside them, who thought he knew the world, into the wildest exasperation by that pause of theirs. His mother even loosed her bonnet off her aching head, and ventured to lean back under the influence of that visionary consolation; while Vincent, aggravated to the intolerable pitch, sprang up, and, once more seizing Williams by the arm, shook her unawares in the violence of his anxiety. "Answer me," cried the young man; "you tell us everything but the most important of all. Besides this girl—and Mary—who was with my sister when she went away?"

"O Lord! you shake the breath out of me, Mr. Arthur—you do," cried the woman. "Who? why, who should it be, to be sure, but him as had the best right after yourself to take Miss Susan to her mamma? You've crossed her on the road, poor dear," said the adherent of the house, wringing her hands; "but she was going to her ma—that's where she was going. Mr. Arthur's letter gave her a turn; and then, to be sure, when Mr. Fordham came, the very first thing he thought upon was to take her to her mamma."

Vincent groaned aloud. In his first impulse of fury he seized his hat and rushed to the door to pursue them anyhow, by any means. Then, remembering how vain was the attempt, came back again, dashed down the hat he had put on, and seized upon the railway book in his pocket, to see when he

could start upon that desperate mission. Minister as he was, a muttered curse ground through his teeth—villain! coward! destroyer!—curse him! His passion was broken in the strangest way by the composed sounds of his mother's voice.

"It was very natural," she said, with dry tones, taking time to form the words as if they choked her; "and of course, as you say, Williams, Mr. Fordham has the best right. He will take her to his mother's—or—or leave her in my son's rooms in Carlingford; and as she has Mary with her—Arthur," continued his mother, fixing a warning emphatic look upon him as he raised his astonished eyes to her face, "you know that is quite right: after you—Mr. Fordham is—the only person—that could have taken care of her in her journey. There; I am satisfied. Perhaps, Williams, you had better go to bed. My son and I have something to talk of, now I feel myself."

"I'll go light the fire, and get a cup of tea—O Lord! what Miss Susan would say if she knew you were here, and had got such a fright!" cried the old servant; "but now you're composed, there's nothing as'll do you good like a cup of tea."

"Thank you—yes; make it strong, and Mr. Arthur will have some too," said the widow; "and take care the kettle is boiling; and then, Williams, you must not mind us, but go to bed."

Vincent threw down his book, and stared at her with something of that impatience and half-contempt which had before moved him. "If the world were breaking up, I suppose women could still drink tea!" he said, bitterly.

"O Arthur, my dear boy," cried his mother, "don't you see we must put the best face on it now? Everybody must not know that Susan has been carried away by a—O God, forgive me! don't let me curse him, Arthur. Let us get away from Lonsdale, dear, before we say anything. Words will do no good. O my dear boy, till we know better, Mr. Fordham is Susan's betrothed husband, and he has gone to take care of her to Carlingford. Hush—don't say any more. I am going to compose myself, Arthur, for my child's sake," cried the mother, with a smile of anguish, looking into her son's face. How did she drive those tears back out of her patient eyes? How

did she endure to talk to the old servant about what was to be done to-morrow—and how the sick lady was next door—till the excited and shivering attendant could be despatched up-stairs and got out of the way? Woman's weaker nature, that could mingle the common with the great; or woman's strength, that could endure all things—which was it? The young man, sitting by in a sullen, intolerable suspense, waiting till it was practicable to rush away through the creeping gloom of night after the fugitives, could no more understand these phenomena of love and woe, than he could translate the distant mysteries of the spheres.

CHAPTER XVII.

EARLY morning, but black as midnight; bitter cold, if bitterer cold could be, than that to which they entered when they first came to the deserted house; the little parlor, oh, so wofully trim and tidy, with the fire laid ready for lighting, which even the mother, anxious about her son, had not the heart to light; the candle on the table between them lighting dimly this speechless interval; some shawls laid ready to take with them when they went back again to the earliest train; Mrs. Vincent sitting by with her bonnet on, and its veil drooping half over her pale face, sometimes rousing up to cast hidden looks of anxiety at her son, sometimes painfully saying something with a vain effort at smiling—what o'clock was it? when did he think they could reach town?—little ineffectual attempts at the common intercourse which seemed somehow to deepen the dreadful silence, the shivering cold, the utter desolation of the scene. Such a night!—its minutes were hours as they stole by noiseless in murderous length and tedium—and the climax of its misery was in the little start with which Mrs. Vincent now and then woke up out of her own thoughts to make that pitiful effort to talk to her son.

They were sitting thus, waiting, not even venturing to look at each other, when a sudden sound startled them. Nothing more than a footstep outside approaching softly. A footstep—surely two steps. They could hear them far off in this wonderful stillness, making steady progress near—nearer. Mrs. Vincent rose up, stretching her little figure into a preternatural hysteric semblance of height. Who was it?—Two people—surely

women—and what women could be abroad at such an hour? One lighter, one heavier, irregular as female steps are, coming this way—this way! Her heart fluttered in the widow's ears with a sound that all but obliterated those steps which still kept advancing. Hark, sudden silence! a pause—then, O merciful Heaven, could it be true? a tinkle at the bell—a summons at the closed door.

Mrs. Vincent had flown forth with open arms—with eyes blinded. The poor soul thought nothing less than that it was her child returned. They carried her back speechless, in a disappointment too cruel and bitter to have expression. Two women—one sober, sleepy, nervous, and full of trouble, unknown to either mother or son—the other with a certain dreadful inspiration in her dark face, and eyes that gleamed out of it as if they had concentrated into them all the blackness of the night.

"You are going back, and so am I," Mrs. Hilyard said. "I came to say a word to you before I go away. If I have been anyhow the cause, forgive me. God knows, of all things in the world the last I dreamt of was to injure this good woman or invade her innocent house. Do you know where they have gone?—did she leave any letters?—Tell me. She shall be precious to me as my own, if I find them out."

Mrs. Vincent freed herself from her son's arms, and got up with her blanched face. "My daughter—followed me—to Carlingford," she said, in broken words, with a determination which sat almost awful on her weakness. "We have had the great misfortune—to cross each other—on the way. I am going—after her—directly. I am not afraid—of my Susan. She is all safe in my son's house."

The others exchanged alarmed looks, as they might have done had a child suddenly assumed the aspect of a leader. She, who could scarcely steady her trembling limbs to stand upright, faced their looks with a dumb denial of her own anguish. "It is—very unfortunate—but I am not anxious," she said, slowly, with a ghastly smile. Human nature could do no more. She sank down again on her seat, but still faced them—absolute in her self-restraint, rejecting pity. Not even tears should fall upon Susan's sweet name—not while her mother lived to defend it in life and death.

The Carlingford needlewoman stood opposite her, gazing with eyes that went beyond that figure, and yet dwelt upon it, at so wonderful a spectacle. Many a terrible secret of life unknown to the minister's gentle mother throbbed in her heart; but she stood in a pause of wonder before that weaker woman. The sight of her stayed the passionate current for a moment, and brought the desperate woman to a pause. Then she turned to the young man who stood speechless by his mother's side,—

"You are a priest, and yet you do not curse," she said. "Is God as careless of a curse as of a blessing? *She* thinks he will save the Innocents yet. She does not know that he stands by like a man, and sees them murdered, and shines and rains all the same. God! No—he never interferes. Good-by," she added, suddenly, holding out to him the thin hand upon which, even in that dreadful moment, his eye still caught the traces of her work, the scars of the needle, and stains of the coarse color. "If you ever see me again I shall be a famous woman, Mr. Vincent. You will have a little of the traits of my glory, and be able to furnish details of my latter days. This good Miss Smith here will tell you of the life it was before; but if I should make a distinguished end after all, come to see me then—never mind where. I speak madly, to be sure, but you don't understand me. There—not a word. You preach very well, but I am beyond preaching now—Good-by."

"No," said Vincent, clutching her hand—"never, if you go with that horrible intention in your eyes; I will say no farewell to such an errand as this."

The eyes in their blank brightness paused at him for a moment before they passed to the vacant air on which they were always fixed—paused with a certain glance of troubled amusement, the lightning of former days. "You flatter me," she said, steadily, with the old habitual movement of her mouth. "It is years since anybody has taken the trouble to read any intention in my eyes. But don't you understand yet that a woman's intention is the last thing she is likely to perform in this world? We do have meanings now and then, we poor creatures, but they seldom come to much. Good-by, good-by!"

"You cannot look at me," said Vincent,

with a conscious incoherence, reason or argument being out of the question. "What is it you see behind there? Where are you looking with those dreadful eyes?"

She brought her eyes back as he spoke, with an evident effort, to fix them upon his face. "I once remarked upon your high-breeding," said the strange woman. "A prince could not have shown finer manners than you did in Carlingford, Mr. Vincent. Don't disappoint me now. If I see ghosts behind you, what then? Most people that have lived long enough, come to see ghosts before they die. But this is not exactly the time for conversation, however interesting it may be. If you and I ever see each other again, things will have happened before then; you, too, perhaps, may have found the ghosts out. I appoint you to come to see me after you have come to life again, in the next world. Good-night. I don't forget that you gave me your blessing when we parted last."

She was turning away when Mrs. Vincent rose, steadying herself by the chair, and put a timid hand upon the stranger's arm. "I don't know who you are," said the widow; "it is all a strange jumble; but I am an older woman than you, and a—minister's wife. You have something on your mind. My son is frightened you will do something—I cannot tell what. You are much cleverer than I am, but I am, as I say, an older woman, and a—minister's wife. I am not afraid of anything. Yes! I know God does not always save the Innocents, as you say—but he knows why, though we don't. Will you go with me? If you have gone astray when you were young," said the mild woman, raising up her little figure with an ineffable simplicity, "I will never ask any questions, and it will not matter—for everybody I care for knows me. The dreadful things you think of will not happen if we go together. I was a minister's wife thirty years. I know human nature and God's goodness. Come with me."

"Mother, mother! what are you saying?" cried Vincent, who had all the time been making vain attempts to interrupt this extraordinary speech. Mrs. Hilyard put him away with a quick gesture. She took hold of the widow's hand with that firm, supporting, compelling pressure under which, the day before, Mrs. Vincent had yielded up all

her secrets. She turned her eyes out of vacancy to the little pale woman who offered her this protection. A sudden mist surprised those gleaming eyes—a sudden thrill ran through the thin, slight, iron figure, upon which fatigue and excitement seemed to make no impression. The rock was stricken at last.

"No—no," she sighed, with a voice that trembled. "No—no! the lamb and the lion do not go together yet in this poor world. No—no—no. I wonder what tears have to do in my eyes; ah, God in the skies! if ever you do miracles, do one for this woman, and save her child! Praying and crying are strange fancies for me—I must go away; but first," she said, still holding Mrs. Vincent fast—"a woman is but a woman after all—if it is more honorable to be a wicked man's wife than to have gone astray, as you call it, then there is no one in the world who can breathe suspicion upon me. Ask this other good woman here, who knows all about me, but fears me, like you. Fears me! What do you suppose there can be to fear, Mr. Vincent, you who are a scholar, and know better than these soft women," said Mrs. Hilyard, suddenly dropping the widow's hand, and turning round upon the young minister, with an instant throwing off of all emotion, which had the strangest horrifying effect upon the little agitated company, "in a woman who was born to the name of Rachel Russell, the model English wife? Will the world ever believe harm, do you imagine, of such a name? I will take refuge in my ancestress. But we go different ways, and have different ends to accomplish," she continued, with a sudden returning gleam of the subdued horror—"Good-night—good-night!"

"Oh, stop her, Arthur—stop her! Susan will be at Carlingford when we get there; Susan will go nowhere else but to her mother," cried Mrs. Vincent, as the door closed on the nocturnal visitors. "I am as sure—as sure!—Oh, my dear, do you think I can have any doubt of my own child? As for Susan going astray—or being carried off—or falling into wickedness—Arthur!" said his mother, putting back her veil from her pale face, "now I have got over this dreadful night, I know better—nobody must breathe such a thing to me. Tell her so, dear—tell her so!—call her back—they will be at Carlingford when we get there!"

Vincent drew his mother's arm through his own, and led her out into the darkness, which was morning and no longer night. "A few hours longer and we shall see," he said, with a hard-drawn breath. Into that darkness Mrs. Hilyard and her companion had disappeared. There was another line of railway within a little distance of Lonsdale, but Vincent was at pains not to see his fellow-travellers as he placed his mother once more in a carriage, and once more caught the eye of the man whose curious look had startled him. When the gray morning began to dawn, it revealed two ashen faces, equally speechless and absorbed with thoughts which neither dared communicate to the other. They did not even look at each other, as the merciful noise and motion wrapped them in that little separate sphere of being. One possibility and no more kept a certain coherence in both their thoughts, otherwise lost in wild chaos—horrible suspense—an uncertainty worse than death.

POMPEIAN GLASS.—M. Bontemps, in a memoir read at the last meeting of the Paris Academy, on the squares of glass found in the excavations at Pompeii, raises the question of the manner of their manufacture. The squares measure about 18 inches by 24 inches, and are from an inch to two inches thick. The question raised is, whether they were blown like our common window glass, or cast. M. Bontemps

considers the air-bubbles and other features presented demonstrate decidedly that they were simply cast. Samples of the plates have been analyzed by Mr. Frederic Claudet, of London, the son of the eminent photographer, with the following result:—Silica, 69.43; lime, 7; soda, 17; alumina, 3; oxide of iron, 1; = 97.43, which is very nearly the composition of the glass of the present day

LOOKING BACK.

As a lone pilgrim, travel-worn and weary,
With bleeding feet, and garments that the thorn
Has rent in shreds that flutter in the wind,
Clings to a crag upon the bleak hill-top,
And sees, far off, the track he *might* have trod,
So smooth, so soft, so decked with fruit and
flowers!

Thus I, Life's journey scarcely half performed,
Heart-bruised, soul-weary, sadly turn and see,—
Through vistas full of trouble and regret,
The path I might have trodden to the end,
So straight, so happy! sink me down and muse
On what I am, and what I might have been.
Too late, too late! I cannot now return.
Too late, too late! I may not now retrace.
Beyond extends the mountain's swift descent,
And the wild ocean where the sun goes down.

Yet I must pause, and see with other eyes,
In other shapes, the pleasures of my youth,
For sad experience, like the angel's spear
Has touched what once appeared as fairy forms,
And troops of jibing devils fill the air.

There is the pool where, lulled in noxious rest,
I ate the lotos-fruit of idleness.

And there the little hill, from which I turned
Half clomb, to seek—in vain—a smoother track.
Oh, fool, fool, fool! another manful stride,
And the broad plains of honor were in view!
There are the friends who cheered my quick
relapse,

And helped to chase each good resolve away;
But each one carries, crumpled, in his hand,
The mask that once I fancied was his face.
What angel form is that, with saddened eyes?
What hag is this, with scorn upon her brow?
The loving maid whose faithful heart I broke,
The painted wanton who betrayed my soul.

On every side I see a thousand snares
Set plainly under the bright eye of day,
Baited with noisome weeds, that well I know
Will seem rare fruits to such as I have been.
They come. They laugh; the blind insensate
crew;

They kiss the trap, they hug the filthy lure.
"Back, on your lives!" Alas, they hear me
not!

Heed not the jesture or the warning voice,
Or mock me as a dreamer for my pain.
No power have I to break th' accursed spell.
Each must go on, on his appointed way.
Stand where I stand, and see the things I see.
Too late, too late! they must not then return.
Too late, too late! they cannot then retrace.
Beyond will be the mountain's steep descent,
And the wild ocean where the sun goes down.

—Once a Week.

A. F.

RELIQUES.

A WILD, wet night: the driving sleet
Blurs all the lamps along the quay;
The windows shake; the busy street
Is still alive with hurrying feet;
The wind raves from the sea.

So let it rave! My lamp burns bright;
My long day's work is almost done;
I curtain out each sound and sight—
Of all nights in the year, to-night
I choose to be alone.

Alone, with doors and windows fast,
Before my open desk I stand. . . .
Alas! can twelve long months be past,
My hidden, hidden wealth! since last
I held thee in my hand?

So, there it lies! From year to year
I see the ribbon change; the page
Turn yellower; and the very tear
That blots the writing, disappear
And fade away with age.

Mine eyes grow dim when they behold
The precious trifles hoarded there—
A ring of battered Indian gold,
A withered bluebell, and a fold
Of sunny chestnut hair.

Not all the riches of the earth,
Not all the treasures of the sea,
Could buy these house-gods from my hearth;
But yet, the secret of their worth
Must live and die with me.

—All the Year Round.

THE VIOLET GIRL'S SONG.

VIOLETS in the sunshine,
Violets wet with dew,
In the autumn twilight
Oft I think of you—
You, the Spring's frail children,
Born 'mid April's grief,
I think of you when Autumn
Yellows every leaf.

Violets in the hedgerows,
Lingering till May,
Where the wind-swayed cowslips
Love to kiss and play,
Bringing hopes of summer,
Not unmixed with grief—
I think of you when Autumn
Yellows every leaf.

—Chambers's Journal.